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MORE REMINISCENCES OF AN  
OLD BOHEMIAN

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THE AUTHOR  
(1913).

*Photo by Hana]*

[*Frontispiece*

# *More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian*

*By Major Fitzroy Gardner, O.B.E.*

*Author of "Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian"*

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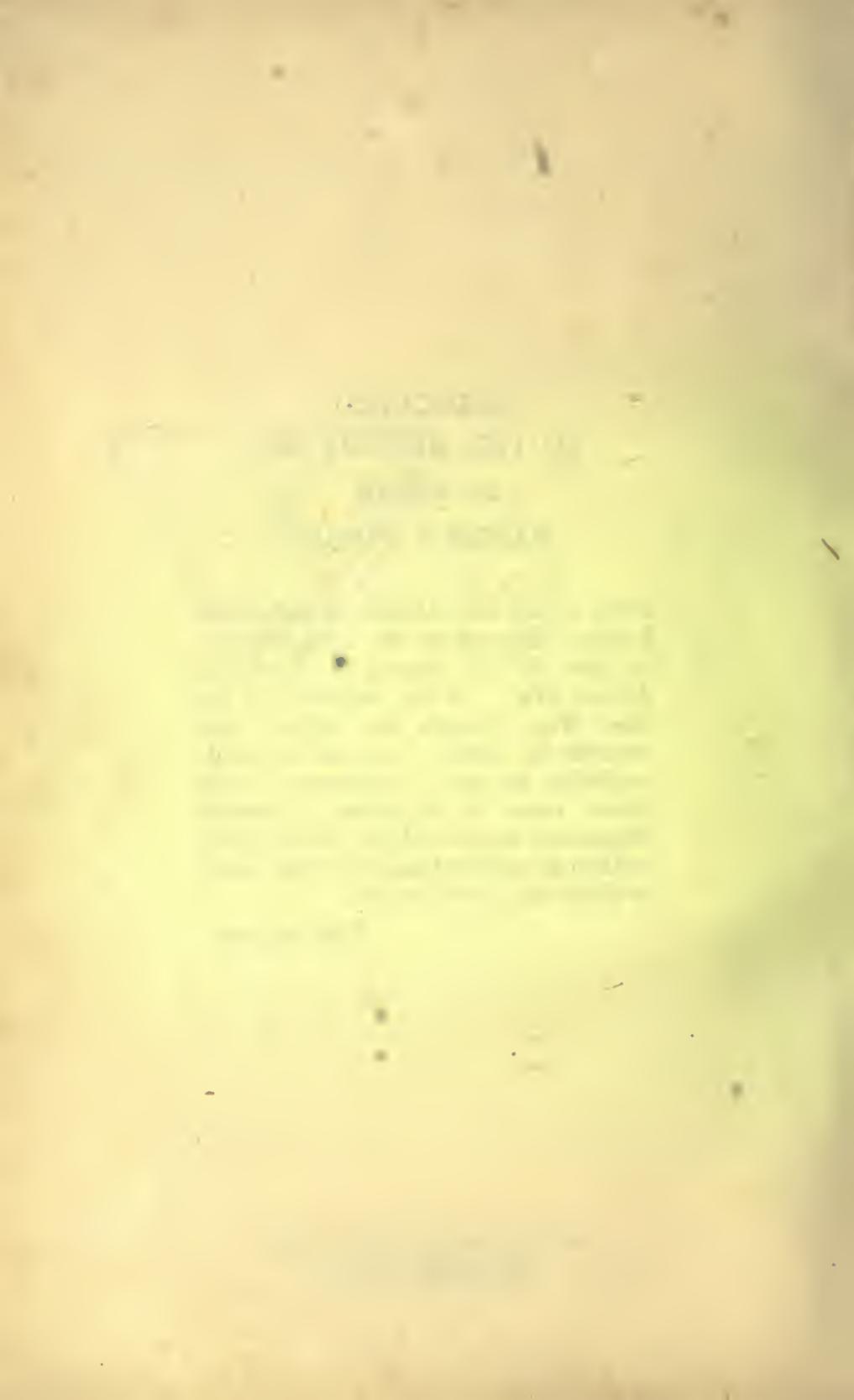
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DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY FRIEND,  
HARRY S. PIPER,

brave Soldier and devoted Husband and Father. Enlisted in the 13th Hussars, to fight for his country in the South African War; on the outbreak of the Great War, although past military age, rejoined the ranks of his old regiment, sacrificing lucrative employment; mentioned twice in dispatches; promoted Regimental Sergeant-Major (West Yorks) and Subaltern (Royal Fusiliers); succumbed to effects of a severe wound.

THE AUTHOR



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## FOREWORD

IT has happened this way: More than one of the many flattering reviewers of my *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, some four years ago, remarked that no doubt I could fill another volume with stories of my exceptionally varied experiences of life. Now, recalling those friendly suggestions, I realise that, when writing such a book and covering a period of sixty years with no diary or previously prepared notes to rely on, one is apt to overlook many incidents and people as interesting as those remembered at the time. In fact, I find that I have sufficient material for a second book, which I trust will be as well appreciated as the other.

By the way, the word "Bohemian" in the title of my other book may have suggested that my reminiscences relate only to Bohemia, in the common acceptation of the term, whereas the word was used in its general sense, that of a man who has led a wandering life and therefore had a variety of experiences. Unconventionality, the main characteristic of Bohemianism, is not a strong point in my temperament, but I must have been unconventional when, as a child of eight, and learning Latin—most of it now forgotten—I made my first attempt in literature by addressing a love-poem to a young lady, some twelve years my senior, in which I rhymed her Christian name, Letitia, with "kingfisher," and with no legitimate excuse for associating that bird with the condition of my heart or the object of my affections. Then, too, I made my first proposal of marriage when I was sixteen, to a plump young German governess who played the zither. Possibly she had a

grandson (not of my lineage) fighting in the Great War against us.

While I was at Rugby and home for the Christmas holidays my mother was gratified by my readiness to accompany her when she went shopping, but she did not perceive that it was only when I had reason to suppose she would be visiting William Whiteley's, then consisting of only one draper's shop of ordinary dimensions, but noted for the quality and low price of certain—what the shopman calls "lines." To me, and perhaps others of my sex, it was noted for something else. There was one particularly good-looking girl among the assistants, and I aspired to making her acquaintance somehow. But one day I grieved to find that she was there no longer, and still more when afterwards my mother casually remarked that she had heard that the young lady had recently become the wife of William Whiteley, whom, by the way, she divorced some years later.

# More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian

## CHAPTER I

### BOYHOOD

My earliest ventures with the cricket bat were in a field in Bayswater, which was covered by blocks of residential buildings before most of those who may read these lines were born. The two favourite London places of indoor amusement for boys in those days were the Polytechnic and the Colosseum. The former, the progenitor of the famous institution now run by the Y.M.C.A. and on the same spot, in Upper Regent Street, combined education and amusement so ingeniously that we boys thought we were being amused while our parents thought they were educating us. In the main hall were working model engines and a big tank in which a diver in full uniform descended and collected coppers that we threw into the water, and into which we could descend ourselves if we would—and possessed the necessary cash—as passengers in a “diving bell.” But the *pièce de résistance* was in the theatre, where, some forty years before the present Polytechnic introduced the kinema to England, we were more than satisfied with instructive dissolving views accompanied by descriptive orations delivered by a gentleman in stentorian tones which we boys delighted in imitating. The outstanding feature of the theatre was “Pepper’s Ghost,” an optical illusion invented by

a "Professor" Pepper, which followed the educational dissolving views as a sort of plum after the medicine of education.

The Colosseum—no connection with the present-day "coliseums"—in its structure pretended to be a replica of the world-famed building in Rome. It stood on the outskirts of Regent's Park near the present position of what remains of Madame Tussaud's, which at that time was in Baker Street. All that I can recall of the place is having stood on a high circular platform, representing, I suppose, a tower, and walking round it, looking down on a panorama view of Paris, depicted by one huge cloth stretched to form a complete circle round, and at some distance from, the platform; also I remember wandering through caves and grottos lit by coloured lamps, and enjoying extra-large penny buns for which the Colosseum was famous.

Later on at Rugby I participated, but inactively, with some five hundred others in an insurrection against the head master—an unpleasant and historical episode in the annals of our great public schools. This open defiance of authority was not much more discreditable and deplorable than its cause. On Temple's resignation as head master, the Trustees, all staunch old Tories, in filling the vacancy, thought more of party politics than the proper qualifications of a head master. The candidature of three eminently suitable assistant-masters from other schools was ignored, and the only candidate known to be a reliable Tory was appointed. As it happened, during his brief tenure of the post he never attempted to exercise any political influence, but he failed conspicuously to inspire respect or confidence; and it was no easy job to follow in the footsteps of such a head master as Frederick Temple. Rugby then passed through a serious crisis, and for a time parents ceased sending their boys there, but, thanks to the splendid traditions created by such head masters as Arnold and

Temple, and to very skilful handling of the situation, in five years it had nearly recovered its old position.

Rugby had a great reputation then for its assistant masters, apart from its two great head masters, Arnold and Temple, and they were seldom unsuccessful as candidates for head masterships of other public schools. Jex-Blake raised Cheltenham from a position of comparative obscurity to the rank of a first-class public school ; and J. M. Wilson, a Senior Wrangler, our mathematical master in my time and a beloved house master, did the same for Clifton. Two of our head masters, Temple and Tait, were afterwards Archbishops of Canterbury. My house master, the Reverend Leonard Burrows (a barrister before he took Holy Orders and became a schoolmaster), had three sons, one of whom is now Bishop of Sheffield. The youngest, then a bright little boy of about two years, of whom we made a pet, was the Ronald Burrows, a memoir of whom by George Glasgow, published last autumn, is a delightful appreciation of a most fascinating, lovable personality. He was one of Oxford's most brilliant products, a Greek scholar and professor whose teaching to Manchester University students was as inspiring as instructive. Incidentally, he was the first lay principal of King's College, London.

A man of my age observes one remarkable change in both public and private schools. In the old days the masters were mostly men of nearly, or quite, middle-age. A couple of years ago, when visiting my old private school, Cheam, for the dedication of the school War Memorial, I, to my surprise, found the head master and his wife so youthful that in my day parents would have hesitated to entrust their boys to them. I soon discovered that the assistant masters were reflections of their chief ; two of those whose acquaintance I made might have only just left public school, and as I observed the terms of intimate friendship between them and the boys I was deeply impressed. The advantages and possibilities of

this new order of things had not before occurred to me. There was a spirit of comradeship and a bond of sympathy between master and boy which would not have been possible with a wide gulf of years between them.

And how Rugby has changed, and not only the school! In my time it was a typical country town with monthly cattle fairs, and occasional cheese fairs, and in the winter an even more important hunting centre than now. I cannot recall a single factory, whereas to-day it is gradually developing into a big manufacturing town. As regards the school itself, in my day we had no swimming bath, but bathed in the river (Avon) about a mile out of the town. The present School Chapel was not finished until the term after I left. Fine and appropriate building as it is, we very old Rugbeians can never regard it with the same interest or reverence as we recall the old Chapel, with its splendid traditions of the Arnold, Tom Brown and Temple periods. No sort of science subject was taught in the school until a year before I went there, when the big block of Science Schools was opened, the pioneer of science-teaching in the "great" public schools. Football was then, as now, compulsory at Rugby, and it was played very fiercely, which proved a severe test of a "new boy's" pluck and endurance. "Hacking" was indulged in freely, and fearlessness of pain and hardness of shins were more useful than any skill. But a few years after I left, the brutality of some of the bigger boys and several cases of serious injury created such a scandal that the head master, in spite of tradition, took stern measures, by which the play became less of a pitched battle and more of a game, as it is to-day. The Rugby football team in those days was a "twenty," not a "fifteen."

The "new boy" at Rugby has an easier time of it now than he had in my day. Then he started his troubles the first Saturday evening of his first term with a terrifying ordeal. He had to stand on a chair at the end of

the dining hall, facing the whole of his "House," and with a lighted candle in each hand and both arms extended, sing some song which he might select for the purpose, any faltering being greeted with yells of derision. If he broke down entirely, as many did, or showed any bad temper, he had to drink a tumblerful of warm water in which a candle had been steeped. But that was a mere detail in the "knocking into shape" of the unfortunate new boy. And he was distinguished, to his sorrow, by having all his first term to wear a tall hat which the other boys frequently bashed in, just to remind him that he was "new"; and how wonderfully the school hatter used to restore the debris to something like its original condition!

That period of my life, apart from the school, was marked first and foremost by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and, incidentally, by two important Post Office innovations, the introduction of the shilling telegram, which superseded the system of charging by distance—a message from London to Edinburgh had cost five shillings—and of the post card. I remember, while my father and I, during my holidays, were staying with a partner in the firm of De La Rue at his country place, his showing us a specimen of the halfpenny post card which they were printing for the Government, to be issued to the public in a few weeks.

But we Rugby boys were much more interested in the first appearance in public, during the same period, of the "two-wheeled velocipede," very soon known as a "bicycle." I suppose that it was due to our proximity to Coventry, whence the new machine emanated, that bicycles were obtainable on hire at Rugby earlier than in London. The "bone-shaker" was an apt description of the primitive machine which we rode in those days. One had to drag it up any gradient approaching to a hill. My greatest achievement in an afternoon was when I succeeded in reaching a place some eight miles away.

When I arrived in Germany after leaving Rugby, the country was settling down and realising its enormous importance after the Franco-Prussian War. The officers of the battalion—the 9th Jäger—stationed at Ratzeburg, a quaint old town covering an island on a lake twelve miles long, had recently received their Iron Crosses. When the Great War broke out over forty years later that battalion was still at Ratzeburg. German troops never changed their station, except in extraordinary circumstances, such as friction with the civil population.

Ratzeburg had then belonged to Prussia only seven years, having been taken from Denmark in the 1864 campaign, and there were many ex-Danes among the inhabitants. The shops and cafés still accepted Danish money, and, in addition to this and the Prussian coinage, *Thalers*, *Groschens* and *Pfennigs*—there were no marks then—the coinage of the two Hanseatic cities, Hamburg and Lubeck, was in circulation, so that one had to have a brain like a calculating-machine in paying and receiving money. While I was at Ratzeburg—nearly a year—a frequent visitor to a local family was a little boy, their cousin, named Stahmer. That boy is now German Ambassador in London.

It seems strange in these days to realise that I at one time contemplated joining the German Army. Other young Englishmen have been attracted as I was in those days by the thoroughness of German military discipline, and at least two, never imagining that we should ever be at war with Germany, entered the Kaiser's service as officers about that time. When my father wrote to me, asking whether I had made up my mind as to what profession I would like to follow, I replied that I proposed to be an officer in the German Army. As he told me afterwards, my letter disturbed him considerably; but he tactfully replied to the effect that he would like to talk over my proposition with me on my return home. When I got back to England, after just



THE AUTHOR,  
Aged 12.

[p. 18



over a year in Germany, and found that I could talk German more fluently than, although perhaps not nearly so correctly as, English, he one evening at dinner, after filling up my glass with port, asked me whether I was serious in wishing to join the German Army. When I replied in the affirmative, he said, "What would you feel like if we and Germany were at war and it was your duty to kill Englishmen?" I changed the subject, also my mind, and a few months later, after I had had a good opportunity for comparing our Army with Germany's, I had so changed my views that I wrote (at the age of eighteen) for a London newspaper a somewhat severe criticism of the severity of German military discipline. Then, and thenceforth, I was convinced that in the next big war in which Germany would be concerned, unless the discipline had been relaxed, it would be more than the rank-and-file could stand. Not many people in this country, even in our Army, can realise that, but for the collapse of the discipline of which German officers were so proud, the War might have lasted another year.

And what a difference, almost pathetic, between that arrogant force of two millions which I knew in the 'seventies and its unobtrusive successor, the Reichswehr a hundred thousand strong. And how little I thought in those days, when the tight-waisted, bullying Prussian officer impressed me with awe, that nearly half a century later a German officer would be officially associated with me in the performance of my duties in Cologne, and click his heels to me when he entered my office, and that a few months later that same officer, demobilised, would be selling microscopes on commission from house to house.

In those days the average Englishman knew little or nothing of Germany beyond the banks of the Rhine and the gambling resorts (Ems, Wiesbaden, Homburg and Baden-Baden), and many of those who read translated

stories of the spectres of the Brocken perhaps did not realise that such a place as the Brocken really existed. Many superstitious Germans took those stories of apparitions seriously.

In the course of a tour in North Germany with a young English friend, we devoted some days to the Hartz Mountains, and of course included the Brocken in our plans. We underestimated the distance of the top of the so-called "mountain" from the town from which we started to walk up it, and, moreover, foolishly left the beaten track to make what we thought would be a short cut, with the result that for some two or three hours we wandered about in the dark trying in vain to strike the path leading to the top, without meeting any other human being. Now and then we rested on a rock or on the ground, hoping to be compensated for our discomfort by seeing a bevy of beautiful fairies engaged in fantastic dances, or at least some weird spectre less beautiful to look upon, but neither fairies nor fearsome apparitions were about that night, and we had to be content with the sight of hundreds of fire-flies disporting themselves in the darkness; not a bad show of its kind. Ultimately we discovered the path and, very tired and hungry, arrived at the little hotel on the top after midnight.

Bismarck was then the most important man in Europe, in Germany equal to the Kaiser, Wilhelm I. The last of the Kaisers, who treated his advice with indifference, was at that time a boy of about nine. I finished my year in Germany on the Rhine. In Coblenz I was introduced to the old Kaiserin Augusta. She was passionately devoted to her daughter-in-law, our Princess Royal, wife of Emperor Frederick, and very kindly disposed to the English in general. She had fitted up a large room in her Palace (where she lived apart from the Kaiser) as an English chapel and often attended the Sunday morning service there, on those occasions always dropping an English half-sovereign into the collecting-bag. The

gardens were beautifully laid out, and croquet was played for the first time in Germany on their lawn.

During my stay at Coblenz I paid several visits to Ems, that delightfully picturesque so-called "health resort"—actually a gambling resort—in the Lahn Valley. I revisited the place when I was with the Rhine Army of Occupation. The gambling-tables disappeared many years ago, and the promenade, where one used to rub elbows with Russian Grand Dukes and their handsome and brilliantly attired wives, and other foreign notabilities, is now almost monopolised by German war profiteers (*Kriegsgewinner*) with their bejewelled, vulgar-looking Frauen, or temporary Frauen. They go there to imbibe the waters and so periodically cleanse their systems of the vile and costly imitations of champagne which during the rest of the year they think it necessary to consume at nearly every meal.

## CHAPTER II

### IN THE LAW COURTS, 1876-1888

ANY playgoer of the present day who has seen a programme of *The Trial by Jury*, the first and one of the best of Gilbert and Sullivan's classic achievements, may have observed that the trial is supposed to take place in "The Court of Exchequer," and those unacquainted with the history of the Law Courts may have concluded that this was the author's fictitious name for an imaginary court of justice. It was in the actual and historical Court of Exchequer that I had my first experience of the administration of justice, having been appointed to a very comfortable and interesting, though not excessively lucrative, post under the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, then Sir FitzRoy Kelly. He was the last to hold the position, as a few years later the Courts of Queen's Bench, Common Pleas and Exchequer (all located at the side of Westminster Hall) were abolished, at any rate in name. Incidentally I was, I believe, the first Law Court official who had to pass a Civil Service examination to qualify for an appointment.

In those days Judges of the Chancery Courts were known as Vice-Chancellors, and certain specially honoured Queen's Counsel were "Serjeants-at-Law," and wore a little black coif on the top of the wig. The first appointment to the judicial bench in my time was that of Mr. Henry Hawkins, Q.C., as judge of the "Exchequer Division" of the High Court, which immediately succeeded the "Court of Exchequer" after the passing of the Judicature Acts. The nickname given Mr. Justice

Hawkins (afterwards Lord Brampton), by the public, "Hanging Hawkins," was stupidly unjustified. It was only by a coincidence that he tried a remarkably large number of murder-cases in which the capital sentence was inevitable. He was naturally of a peculiarly large-hearted and sympathetic disposition, but merciless when dealing with ruffianism in any form, particularly when a woman was the victim.

Needless to say, our Judges are averse from any recognition of personal friends or acquaintances with whom they may come into contact in the performance of their judicial duties ; and Hawkins was no exception. Some years after I had retired from the Law Courts, when I was Beerbohm Tree's manager, we had occasion to take proceedings against a theatrical "pirate" for playing *Trilby* in the provinces without our permission. I heard late on Christmas Eve that this man's company was appearing in the piece at Ryde on Boxing Day. There was no time to be lost in obtaining an injunction, and our solicitor was instructed, and counsel briefed, on Christmas Day. Of course no Court would sit the following day, so we had to make the application to Hawkins, who was Vacation Judge, at his private house. Tree and Hawkins happened to be intimately acquainted. Counsel, solicitor, Tree and I were ushered into his library. It was a very cold day, and the Judge sat close to the fire in an easy chair, with his back to us, to hear the case. In the course of counsel's address Hawkins interrupted him with a question. While the barrister was referring to the solicitor Tree incautiously gave the information required. "Who is that interrupting ?" Hawkins enquired sharply, without looking up from the papers in his hands. "The plaintiff, my Lord," replied the counsel. "Then," said the judge, "please tell the plaintiff that he must not interrupt." Tree, accustomed to the homage of his public, and always sensitive, took the snub sadly to heart, but

found some consolation in judgment being given in his favour.

Here I must digress. That was the occasion of an incident or, rather, a series of incidents, which gave rise to one of many stories of Tree's absent-mindedness. When he drove up to Hawkins' house that morning he told the cabman to wait for him. When he left, forgetting what he had done, he hailed another cab, and drove to his house in Sloane Street, the first cabman following him. He told the second cabman to wait, so that there were two outside his house. Later on he came out and, not noticing either of them, walked to the top of Sloane Street, hailed a third cab and arrived at the Haymarket Theatre—that was before he built His Majesty's—in one cab with two others following behind ; and three cabmen had to be paid. The stage-doorkeeper parted with sixteen shillings altogether, including the time that two of them had been kept waiting. Tree was well known to London cabmen, and it was not worth the while of either of the first two of his three to remind him of their existence.

Sometimes Hawkins could be severe outside his judicial duties. I recall a particular instance. On being shown the list of cases in his Court for the following day, he found that one in which he had to deliver a deferred judgment was omitted, although he had instructed his personal clerk to inform our office that he was ready to deliver it. He sent for the clerk, a very nervous man, and, after listening to his apology for having forgotten to attend to the matter, Hawkins said (in my presence) very quietly, " Jones " (I will call him Jones for this purpose), " I should like you to know that if ever the Creator tried to make a fool he succeeded when he made you." But, as one of his subordinates, I always found him encouraging, and often friendly.

The Lord Chancellor was my supreme chief. When I was appointed he was Lord Cairns, who was succeeded

by Lord Selbourne (the famous Sir Roundell Palmer). Then came Lord James of Hereford, Lord Herschell (the first Israelite to sit on the Woolsack), and Lord Halsbury (as Sir Hardinge Giffard, a shining light of the Criminal Bar), who held the position in three different Ministries.

We who can recall the great lawyers of the Bench and Bar of those days are perhaps apt to exaggerate their superiority in comparison with those of the present day. But in one respect it seems to be justified. There was more apparent dignity on the Bench, and counsel were more respectful to the Judges. Occasionally a Judge would indulge in some jest, and two or three, including Lord Esher, could be witty, but there was no equivalent of a certain Judge of more recent times who, even in cases in which jesting seemed peculiarly out of place, combined his judicial functions with those of Court Jester, interrupting a witness or a counsel's speech with remarks in which real wit seemed conspicuous by its absence.

Among several Judges whom one remembers with almost veneration were two Masters of the Rolls, Lord Jessel and Lord Esher. As a lawyer, the former was the more distinguished of the two. His mastery of case-law was something prodigious, and his judgments distinguished by their soundness and lucidity. I once had a personal experience of Jessel's conscientiousness. A post at the Law Courts, worth more than mine, was vacant. It was for him, as Master of the Rolls, to appoint someone. He consulted one of the "Masters" of the High Court, in whom he had great confidence. I was strongly recommended, and the Judge satisfied himself that I was qualified, but just before he had to notify the Lord Chancellor of his choice he heard that in the ordinary course the post would have been filled by seniority promotion, and he decided to waive his privilege rather than cause dissatisfaction. (The man senior to

me in years of service who got the appointment happened to be notably unfit for it.) In spite of my disappointment I have always admired Jessel's sense of justice and his aversion from anything that might have been construed as "jobbery," of which there was at that time too much in the filling of some of the semi-sinecure berths in the Law Courts. Apart from Jessel's judicial position, I remember him as the father of a strikingly handsome girl, who in my young dancing days was greatly in request in West End ball-rooms.

Lord Esher, who, by the way, rowed in the Cambridge boat, was a strong Judge with a marked antipathy to anything like an exuberance of rhetoric, which accounted for his occasional irritable interruptions of counsel's arguments. His judgments were conspicuous for a rather abruptly conversational style of delivery. Lord Esher was as distinguished in Society as on the Bench, to a large extent on account of his romantic marriage in 1850 to Eugenie Mayer, the exquisitely beautiful and talented daughter of an Alsatian lady as distinguished in London as in Paris salons, and a protégée of the famous Lady Blessington. It was from his mother that Lady Esher's second son took his Christian name. Eugene Brett—I occupied the bed next to his in a dormitory at Cheam School—was an officer in the Scots Guards and died of fever contracted in the first Egyptian Campaign. The eldest son, the present Lord Esher, is nearly as distinguished as his father was.

By the way, there was a good story related in those days, in which Jessel figured, probably without his knowledge and only because he served the purpose better than any other Judge by reason of his character for impartiality. It was said that an American millionaire, who had come to England for the trial of a Chancery suit in which he was largely interested, lacking appreciation of the infallible rectitude of our English Judges and knowing that the Master of the Rolls, who would

try the case, was a Jew, asked his solicitor, as a matter of business, what sum would be required to "square" the Judge, suggesting five thousand pounds, which he was ready to provide for the purpose. The astounded lawyer warned his client that any attempt of the kind would render him liable to imprisonment and might seriously prejudice his case. Jessel gave judgment in the American's favour, and the latter afterwards, with an air of self-satisfaction, said to his lawyer, "Well, you see, you were wrong about that money." "What do you mean? You never offered it, did you?" "Yes," replied his client, "I offered it, but I wrote in our opponent's name." Needless to say, no lawyer ever related this story seriously, but at the time it obtained some credence in America.

There was a striking contrast in personality and method between two of the most successful advocates of that period, Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Chief Justice and Lord Russell of Killowen) and Sir John Holker, who died soon after he was promoted to Lord Justice of Appeal. Russell was by far the more impressive of the two. With a dominating manner and voice he seemed to rely on terrifying a witness under cross-examination, and in his addresses to the jury he was often more threatening than conciliatory. Even counsel on the other side were inclined to be overawed by him. But one day in a sensational *cause célèbre* he met his match in a then little known junior barrister, named Gill, whose reputation was established from that day. Gill not only stood up to the great Q.C., but "set about" him like a terrier worrying a mastiff.

Holker, personally undistinguished, apparently phlegmatic, and with no gift of eloquence or tricks of rhetoric, had a quietly persuasive method of dealing with difficult witnesses and appealing to juries, and he probably got as many verdicts as Russell did. When first I sat in Court, and was easily impressed by counsel's persuasive

arguments—dare I call them tricks?—it seemed that whichever side Holker was on must be the right side. I first knew him when he was Solicitor-General in Disraeli's last Ministry. His second wife, on her first appearance in London Society, took it by storm with her distinguished beauty and charm.

One of the most remarkable men who ever practised at the English Bar during that or any other period was Judah Philip Benjamin. After a very distinguished career as lawyer and politician in Louisiana, he, on the fall of the Confederacy in 1864, had to fly the country in disguise; otherwise there might have been serious consequences of his drastic measures against the Confederates. After several adventures, including a shipwreck and a fire at sea, he found refuge in England, almost penniless. He immediately applied himself to study for the English Bar, and, thanks to his reputation in this country, mainly on account of some remarkable legal treatise with which his name was associated, the usual conditions were dispensed with in his favour. He was “called” at the age of fifty-five, and soon afterwards accorded the privileges and rank of Queen's Counsel. Benjamin was a conspicuous figure in the Courts—literally so, because he was then the stoutest man at the Bar, excepting Pope, Q.C. A more profound and impressive lawyer never argued a case before a bench of English Judges. In the course of my official duties I had to sit in Court throughout one of the longest and most tedious, but deeply studied arguments ever heard in any of our Courts. For five consecutive days Benjamin, in a tiresomely monotonous voice, expounded his points in a foreshore case to three Judges constituting a Divisional Court, who listened so attentively and with such respect for the extraordinary ability of the counsel that, so far as I could observe, not one of them slept or even dozed. Personally, I devoted the time to teaching

myself shorthand, and was deeply grateful to Benjamin for the opportunity.

I remember Henry Asquith, now Earl of Oxford, as a prosperous "junior"; but after he inadvisedly "took silk" he failed to justify his "Q.C." or the fees to which it entitled him, and doubtless he was thankful when he was offered the Home Secretaryship. The most skilful and convincing Parliamentarian carries no weight with the unimpressionable occupants of the Supreme Court Bench.

Sir Harry Poland, who retired from practise before many young barristers of to-day were born, and whose brain is still as clear as it ever was, is the subject of a recently published and deservedly appreciative biography which reminds those who remember him at the Bar that he was not only a most able lawyer, but a charming gentleman. He gave dignity to the Criminal Bar, which has never been one of its characteristics. He had a quiet, unaggressive way of conducting his case before Judge or magistrate, and treated his opponents and their witnesses with chivalrous courtesy. I associate him also with a peculiar habit of emphasising his points by gently tapping one hand with a quill pen held in the other. I heard a young barrister suggest that if Harry Poland were deprived of that particular kind of pen—no other kind was supplied in the Courts in those days—he would be unable to proceed with his case. But I fancy that he would have sent the usher to fetch one and sat down and waited until it came.

At the Bar, and on the Bench, too, there were more *bons viveurs* than one could find at the present time. One eminent Queen's Counsel was noted for his bacchanalian habits, and sometimes his clients suffered for his weakness. It happened that my family was closely interested in a case in which he was briefed as "leader," at a then prodigious fee. It was expected to be a very stiff fight, but he was fully equal to it—or rather would

have been had he conducted the case on the day of the trial. When the case immediately preceding ours on the list was called our solicitor was alarmed to find that our leading counsel had not arrived. He sent a messenger to his chambers, but he was not there, and had not been seen that morning ; and he did not put in an appearance at the Law Courts all that day. We had to settle the action rather than risk losing it altogether. The following morning a solicitor's clerk told me that the previous midday he had seen our expensive and useless "leader" hugging the railings surrounding a church not far from Chancery Lane. About a year later his practice was not worth five hundred pounds a year, less than a twentieth of its former value.

Solicitors seldom come under the limelight of publicity, but in my day there was at least one marked exception in George (afterwards Sir George) Lewis, father of the present well-known solicitor. There was seldom a *cause célèbre* in which he did not represent one of the parties, and when he came into Court and took his seat at the solicitors' table the reporters were prepared for something that would make "good copy." It used to be said that in his office, sometimes only in his mind, were locked up the most precious secrets of many of the nobility and of more than one member of the Royal Family. In a book published over twenty years ago, which achieved a conspicuous *succès de scandale*—*Society in the New Reign*—the author, known to most of his readers only by his *nom de plume*, "A Foreign Resident," described George Lewis as "the professional vindicator of affluent innocence and unveiler of impecunious guilt." But this was grossly misleading. That shrewd Jew lawyer, with the penetrating eyeglass, had a conscience as well as a brain. He was never out to "make costs" or to give publicity, if it could be avoided, to domestic misfortunes.

By the way, I never knew but one firm of solicitors

which enjoyed a widely-known nickname, even outside the legal profession. When the notorious Arthur Orton was impudently fighting his case as claimant to the Tichborne baronetcy and estates, he was represented by the highly respectable firm of Baxter, Rose, and Norton, which young solicitors' clerks and others converted into "Baxter knows it's Orton." Of course no insinuation was seriously intended, and the firm ignored what they might have regarded as a scandalous calumny.

No reminiscences of personalities of the Law Courts in those days should omit the Pollock family, some of which have been on the Bench, while others have enjoyed remunerative appointments—in some cases what are known as "soft jobs"—connected with the High Court. A story was once told of a provincial visitor to London, when seeing the, then, new Royal Courts of Justice for the first time, enquiring of a young, and perhaps disappointed, barrister who was entering the building what it was. "This," replied the lawyer sarcastically, "is the new home which the Government has built for the Pollock family." But the Pollocks have made their mark in other spheres of life than that of the Law. About a century ago a Pollock was the most fashionable saddler in London. One of his sons was Field-Marshal Pollock, another Chief Justice of Bombay, and the third Lord Chief Baron. In the large square house which probably still stands at a corner of Queen Square, Bloomsbury, Chief Baron Pollock and his wife brought up a remarkable family of eleven sons and thirteen daughters, the former including Major-General Sir Richard Pollock, Baron Pollock (one of the last of the Barons of the Exchequer), Sir Frederick, Queen's Remembrancer, George and Henry, Master and Associate, respectively, of the Supreme Court, Sir Edward, now Official Referee, and Julius, a well-known West End physician. Among the present generation of Pollocks

are Sir Frederick (third baronet), Judge of the Admiralty Court of Cinque Ports, Walter Herries and John, both distinguished authors, Adrian, City Chamberlain, and Lord Hanworth, formerly, as Sir Ernest Pollock, Attorney-General in the Bonar Law Ministry and now Master of the Rolls.

During my twelve years at the Law Courts I sometimes acquired interesting information "behind the scenes," which in the present day would have made valuable newspaper copy. The marriage of an elderly and world-famed judge with a comparatively young and particularly good-looking lady of whom nothing or little was known before the marriage, was an interesting event in itself, but the whole story of the alliance has, I believe, never been told in print before. When he first met his wife-to-be and paid her marked attention, he learnt, to his sorrow, that she was already married. But when she related in detail the circumstances of her marriage, including a railway accident between London and Berwick, which caused considerable delay in her reaching her destination where the wedding was to take place under Scottish Law, the astute lawyer saw a ray of hope and, thanks to his enquiries and legal advice, the lady obtained a decree of nullity of marriage on the ground of the period of her residence in Scotland having been a few hours less than the prescribed time. I remember that the railway signalman on the border was one of the principal witnesses. When her engagement to the great lawyer was announced, and subsequently, no one I met seemed to associate her with the petitioner in the nullity case, probably because it was reported only in the Scottish newspapers.

One of the most remarkable cases tried at the Law Courts in my time there was that of *Adams v. Coleridge*. The defendant was a son of Lord Coleridge, then Lord Chief Justice, and the plaintiff husband of Lord Coleridge's daughter. The relations between the father and his

daughter and son-in-law had been very strained, and there was no secret that the Lord Chief Justice was deeply interested in the result of the trial, which was for an alleged libel. The jury gave the plaintiff several hundred pounds' damages, but Mr. Justice Manisty, who tried the case, set the verdict aside on a point of law and entered judgment for the defendant. Thus he raised a storm of indignation, the general impression being that he was unduly favouring a brother judge; and *The Times* leading article on the trial was far from complimentary to him. Whether the ruling was good law or bad, it was not due to any desire to please the L.C.J., as we who were behind the scenes of the Law Courts could have testified. We happened to know that Mr. Justice Manisty and Lord Coleridge were on very far from friendly terms. If the former erred it may have been in his anxiety to avoid being prejudiced against the son of a man whom he disliked. There was no more scrupulously just member of the High Court Bench at that time.

There were two other Judges then who were not on friendly terms: Justice Hawkins and Baron Huddleston. It was probably due to Hawkins, a socially, very unpretentious man, being bored by Huddleston, who had married Lady Diana Beauclerk, rather frequently referring to his aristocratic friends. It happened once that the two were on the same circuit. It was the invariable practice, and I suppose is still, for the two Judges of a circuit to live together in "Judges' lodgings," always accompanied by their "Marshals." Hawkins' Marshal was Claude Wade, a friend of mine, and Huddleston's one of the Beauclerks, a brother of Lady Diana. Wade told me afterwards that every evening at dinner he and Beauclerk had to monopolise the conversation, and that immediately after the meal was finished Hawkins would insist on him going out for a walk with him until bedtime.

Apropos of the private lives of Judges, I have just recalled a story told me by my father some years after he retired from practice. One day a strikingly handsome woman, apparently well-to-do, giving a name which was unknown to him, called to request him to attend her in her confinement which was expected shortly. She gave no information as to her husband, but an address in a street of some distinction, and she mentioned that she had already engaged a nurse. After the event my father noticed that on each of his visits the patient enquired as to exactly when he would pay his next. During these attendances the doctor never saw anyone in the house except the patient, her nurse, and the parlourmaid who opened the door. There was evidently some mystery about the lady, which did not concern him. After what he intended to be his last visit he happened one day to be driving past the house and stopped to enquire after her. When he got out of the carriage an elderly man was opening the door with a latchkey ; he was one of my father's regular patients, a very eminent Judge of whom not a breath of scandal had been heard. There was not time for him to open and close the door before he knew that he was recognised. Although evidently embarrassed, he faced the situation with dignified equanimity, thanking the doctor for the services which he had rendered the lady, also for the discreet silence which he was sure he could expect from him in the future. Thus my father, through no fault of his, lost one of his best patients. I am sure that when he told me the story, long after the Judge's death, referring to him merely as "a very eminent Judge," it did not occur to him that I could recall that one Judge, and no other, among his patients.

I knew of only one person who ventured to treat Judges with anything like familiarity, although it never amounted to "contempt." Mrs. Georgina Weldon, for some years a well-known frequenter of the Courts,

first at Westminster and later in the Strand, was unlike most of the other so-called "litigants-in-person" in that, although the actions which she brought against various people, including her husband, were the result of grievances, often imaginary, she was of a very cheerful disposition; and most of the Judges who dealt with her cases were disposed to tolerate the free-and-easy manner of the comely lady whose blue eyes seemed to be always smiling. One summer morning she came into my office, wearing a yellow straw hat of gigantic proportions, trimmed with a mass of artificial flowers which Kew Gardens experts might have failed to identify, the whole effort being very unlike that of the wearer's usual mode of attire. When I looked at her, and her hat, in surprise, she said, smiling, "I have got a case before Mr. Justice Grove this morning. I have never yet known him laugh, but I am going to see what I can do with this." I was curious to know the result, and got into the Court just in time. Georgina's entrance produced a titter among the barristers and solicitors, and the Judge, with an austere expression on his face, looked round to ascertain the cause. When he caught sight of the hat, and recognised the wearer, it was too much for him; his face relaxed, and he actually laughed.

Among the shorthand-writers who then frequently attended the Courts was one whose name I happened to learn was Bottomley, but I was not aware that his other name was Horatio. I have lately seen it stated that he was a "semi-official" shorthand-writer. He had no official position, being employed by different solicitors to take notes of proceedings in which they were concerned.

In the early period of my connection with the Law I used to be interested in a remarkable individual, almost an institution, who hung about the precincts of the Bankruptcy Court, then, with its offices, housed in an antiquated building in Portugal Street. Perhaps there are now some members or ex-members of the legal

profession old enough to remember that elderly, poor-looking man in wig and gown, the former more black than white for want of a "dressing," and the latter bearing marks of old age, who appeared to be always in readiness for some hoped-for emergency. I knew nothing of the Bankruptcy Court procedure, which was, and is, quite apart from that of the other Courts; I could only suppose that it included something which required the merely formal services of a barrister, as in the case of what in the King's Bench is, or was, known as a "side-bar brief," with its accompanying half-guinea. Poor fellow, he did not look capable of earning any higher fee.

By the way, there are not many old enough to remember, and others have probably forgotten, that in the 'eighties, during the period of Irish dynamite outrages in London, a military guard was on duty at the Law Courts. Justice Denman, who had passed severe sentences on some of the dynamite fraternity, was constantly under police protection. When he was sitting "in Chambers" an armed detective occupied a chair outside the door, and everyone entering it was scrutinised. But, in spite of him and his revolver, someone managed one day to get away with a heavy marble clock, included in the furniture of the room, and it was never recovered. A few years earlier, in fact before the Courts moved from Westminster and Lincoln's Inn to the Strand, a disappointed litigant in a Chancery suit took a shot at a Vice-Chancellor—I forgot which—who had tried his case, as the Judge was leaving his Court at Lincoln's Inn. He missed his mark and was confined in Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum.

Those semi-sinecure clerkships in the Law Courts were blind alleys as regards any future career. Only one of us who held them in the Law Courts about my time made any sort of mark in the outside world. James Templer threw up a clerkship in the old Court of Queen's Bench

and, as a captain in the Militia, became the pioneer of Military Aeronautics in this country. He convinced the War Office of the value of the balloon for observation purposes, and was attached to the Royal Engineers to form, and take charge of, the School of Military Ballooning at Chatham. Year after year the Government gave him almost a blank cheque to satisfy his requirements. His stores included an enormous quantity of copper and copper wire, most of which disappeared one day. But the mystery was soon solved by a sergeant, who had access to the store, also disappearing. Nothing was heard of him until some fifteen years later when he was recognised among a batch of Boer prisoners taken in the South African War. Ex-sergeant—I forget his name—had joined the Boer forces as instructor in field-engineering, to fight against his own countrymen. He was tried by Field Court Martial, with no reference to the missing stores, and shot on the following day.

Major Templer lost one of his balloons in tragic circumstances. In 1884 he had arranged to take two friends on one of his flights. He, Mr. Powell, a Member of Parliament, and Mr. (now Sir James) Agg-Gardner were to make the ascent from a little village, Eypes, on the Dorset coast. Just as they were about to start, the balloon somehow got out of control. Templer and Agg-Gardner jumped out of the basket, but Powell was carried away to sea in the direction of the French coast. In spite of searches by Naval vessels and exhaustive enquiries among shipmasters, and the hearty co-operation of the French Government, neither balloon nor passenger was ever traced. But several years later a large piece of silk was found in an out-of-the-way spot in the Pyrenees, which it was thought might have been part of the missing balloon's cover. There was another connection between ballooning and the Law Courts. The young Pollock, who devoted himself enthusiastically to practical ballooning, and made several important flights in the 'nineties,

was a nephew of one of the Pollocks to whom I have referred, and one of the many clever grandsons of Chief Baron Pollock.

As I look back at those twelve years of intimate association with the Law Courts, one impression stands out above all others—a sense of pride in the British administration of Justice ; not only in the spirit which inspires it, but in the methods of procedure by which it is regulated. The average “ Man in the Street ” cannot fully realise the great superiority of our own country over any other in this respect. And I have never been so conscious or proud of it as when I have heard Germans express their surprise at, and appreciation of, the strict impartiality with which their countrymen have been tried by the British Summary and Military Courts of the Army of Occupation on the Rhine.

## CHAPTER III

### VICTORIAN LONDON

MY acquaintance with London goes back far enough for me to remember milk being brought round by Welsh-women in cans suspended from wooden yokes over their shoulders, the opening of the Metropolitan (the first underground) Railway, the roof of railway carriages on other lines being used for piling up the passengers' luggage, the great Tooley Street Fire (in which the chief of the Fire Brigade lost his life), the Hyde Park Riots of 1866 (the end of which I actually witnessed), the death of the Prince Consort and—greatest impression of all—the State entry of Princess Alexandra of Wales into London.

It is remarkable that during the last forty years of Queen Victoria's reign there were not nearly so many buildings of any architectural importance erected in London as there have been in the past fifteen years. But, on the other hand, in the twenty years ended in the early 'eighties the improvements in the main arteries were of far more importance than any work of the kind carried out since. I remember the construction of Victoria Street, Westminster (on little more than a swamp), of the Thames Embankment (actually on a swamp), and of Queen Victoria Street; also of Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road, both displacing labyrinths of more or less slum streets. The two last brought about the downfall of the old Metropolitan Board of Works, equivalent to the present L.C.C. Grave allegations were made against them by the Press, and a Royal

Commission, which enquired into the matter, found that one of their high officials had received bribes of at least ten thousand pounds in connection with the awarding of compensation. There was then no law by which he could be prosecuted, and he applied the money to the purchase and running of a Society journal, and lost every penny. When I saw him last, shortly before his death, he looked as if he needed food.

Apropos of slum districts, there was in those days nothing in London worse than the Seven Dials with its seven streets converging at a point near where the Palace Theatre stands ; Charing Cross Road did not exist then. Many of the houses of three of those streets were inhabited by families of the criminal classes. At one time I frequently passed through "The Dials," in making a short cut, and saw evidence of the character of the people. The police often had a rough time, and on two occasions I had, too, when going to their assistance. But one evening in 1878 the neighbourhood lost a considerable number of its criminal population. Two locally popular members of the fraternity had been sentenced to penal servitude, and a "friendly lead" was arranged to raise a fund for the benefit of the men's families. It took the form of a river "outing" on a then favourite excursion steamer, the *Princess Alice*. On the way back from the down-river trip she was run into by another vessel, and about five hundred passengers, most of them from Seven Dials, were drowned. It was not known at the time, except to the police, from whom I heard it, that the disaster accounted for a very marked improvement in the character of "The Dials."

I recall the opening of St. Pancras Station when the Midland Railway was extended to London, also the old ramshackle Bishopsgate Station which served as the London terminus of the Great Eastern Railway before Liverpool Street Station was built. I was interested in watching the excavations for the District Railway, by

which a few years later I travelled daily to the City in the winter, using in the summer a three-horse bus which stopped only twice between the Marble Arch and the Bank. There was no "Traffic Problem" then. Several of these so-called "express" buses ran every morning between Bayswater and the Bank. Most of the passengers by any one of them used it every morning, and were known as "regulars," with seats inside or on the top reserved for them. Nearly all the "inside regulars" of a bus got to know one another, and conversations were carried on which would be impossible with the present unsociable system of seating. It was a recognised custom for the "regulars" to express their appreciation of driver and conductor by presenting each of them with a white tall hat on the first of May and a smart overcoat at Christmas, and on May Day the driver also received a new whip which he always decorated with blue ribbon. Outside passengers by these buses had to be fairly athletic ; there were no staircases in those days, and any of them boarding the vehicle, except at one of the few stopping-places, had to climb up an iron ladder at the back of the bus while the latter was going as fast as its good-looking horses could trot.

When I first knew London intimately there were only two hotels of any structural importance in the West End, excepting those attached to railway termini : the Langham, at the bottom of Portland Place, and the Alexandra at Hyde Park Corner. The few Americans who visited London then generally used the Langham, while well-to-do bachelors, and members of country families having no Town residences found all that they required in unostentatiously conducted private, or, so-called, "family" hotels in the heart of the West End, several of which, in spite of the allurements of the more modern and shriekingly luxurious palaces, are still patronised by people of means and position who cannot afford, or have no desire, to live up to the standard of film stars and other American

millionaires or of British parvenues and adventurers of various countries. But I would not for a moment suggest that these sumptuous receptacles of cosmopolitan superfluous cash are exclusively used by such folk, seeing that I have occasionally, too seldom, dunched, dined or supped as guest of their quite normal patrons.

There were then no big handsome blocks of "mansions" containing residential flats. The flat habit, so far as I could ascertain, originated in or near Victoria Street, Westminster. It came to London from Edinburgh, which may account for the first of them that I was ever in being in a block at the back of Victoria Street, known as "Edinburgh Mansions." Not half of the present imposing public offices in Whitehall had come into existence; and the Royal Courts of Justice existed only on paper, in some drawers at the office of Works, and the splendid buildings on the Embankment, accommodating the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police, are only a little over thirty years old. By the way, many architects, and others interested in architecture, must have wondered why the lower part of one of these two buildings is of stone while the rest is brick. In the late 'seventies a company was formed with a great flourish of trumpets to build an Opera House worthy of the British Metropolis. Work was started, but when the stone walls were no more than thirty feet high, it had to be abandoned for want of capital. For some years those walls stood deserted, as a monument of the British public's indifference, until the ground was acquired for the building of the Police headquarters, and the existing stonework was utilised for the purpose without disturbing it.

I remember the opening of the Holborn Viaduct (1871 or 1872), by which horses and foot passengers were saved the steep descent from Holborn into the "valley" below and the ascent to Newgate Street on the other side, and vice versa. It was such an important occasion that for

months afterwards bus conductors did a lucrative trade in selling to their "fares" photographs (before the days of picture postcards) of the first bus that crossed the Viaduct. Many times I have paid the toll—I think it was a penny—to a man wearing a white apron, for crossing Waterloo Bridge, and more than once I crossed the Thames by means of the Tower Subway which was constructed in 1869, with an entrance near the Tower, and finally closed some thirty years ago. It was nothing more than a big drain-pipe, the inside barely deep enough for a fairly tall man to walk through without damaging his hat.

Since then there have been several marked changes in the City. When I worked in a stockbroker's office the courtyard of the Royal Exchange had no glass roof, and the financial magnates who forgathered there, as, I believe, they do now, at about three o'clock every afternoon, transacted their business under umbrellas when it rained. Then, too, the interior walls of the Royal Exchange have been beautified with the fine historical frescoes, the existence of which seems unknown to a large majority of Londoners. By the removal of Christ's Hospital, an historic and interesting institution has disappeared from the City. One used to enjoy watching the "blue-coat boys" playing football on the other side of a high railing in Newgate Street. And, by the way, the present generation has probably never heard that at one time there was an underground pneumatic tube, with a terminus in that street, by which parcels of goods were conveyed from the City to the West End terminus near Oxford Circus.

London lost one of its historic landmarks when, about a quarter of a century ago, Newgate Prison was demolished to make room for the present building which, having only a few cells for the temporary accommodation of persons being tried in the adjoining Central Criminal Court, is a prison only by name. I am a few

years too young to have seen the great crowds waiting in the street outside, as they sometimes did all night, to get a good view of the hanging of some unfortunate fellow-creature. I paid two visits connected with my duty at the Law Courts to Horsemonger Lane Jail, one of the old " debtors' prisons." It was closed early in the 'eighties. Another prison which has more recently disappeared was Millbank, latterly used only for women. It stood on the site now occupied by the Tate Gallery and the Military Hospital.

One need not have reached the senile stage to have seen Temple Bar several hundred times, as I did, that famous old gateway separating the City from mere London, through which the Sovereign could not pass without certain formalities ; or to remember the picturesque centuries-old inn with its courtyard and galleries, which stood somewhere about where the Prudential Assurance Company is now housed in Holborn. At one time I was often in the old original Bow Street Police Court, sometimes as a witness, once as a prosecutor, more frequently to hear some case which happened to interest me. It stood exactly opposite the present Police Court. Having no courtyard to which the public would not have been admitted, convicted prisoners were brought out of the only door and hustled to the police van (" Black Maria ") outside between two rows of constables ; otherwise some of the rough population of the neighbourhood, always waiting to cheer their unfortunate friends, would probably have attempted to rescue them.

In these days of intensely congested street traffic in London, particularly in warm weather, I sometimes deplore the disappearance of the old Penny Steamers—a penny being the minimum fare—which used to ply between Hammersmith or Battersea and London Bridge. I used to make frequent use of them, sometimes with no other object than getting fresh air and studying life on London's water highway. They were unprofitable in

those days, which was to some extent due to the uncomfortable accommodation provided. Perhaps the L.C.C., in one of their fits of sanity, will before long realise the necessity and practicability of reviving a means of transit which would relieve the present congestion on roads and in tubes and Underground.

One of the most remarkable omnibus services in London at that time was provided by a couple of little one-horsed vehicles with no outside seats, which plied between Waterloo Station and the north end of the bridge. They did not have a conductor, the penny fares being collected by the driver through a trap-opening in the roof. As there was no one to start or stop the bus there were occasional accidents to persons who attempted to enter or leave when it was in motion. Taking advantage of this, an enterprising, and rather notorious, Jew solicitor used to post one of his sons for several hours every day at one or other terminus of that bus route in search of new clients. When a passenger, usually an elderly lady, met with an accident, however insignificant, generally due to his, or her, foolishness, the son on duty would come forward, and, introducing himself as a solicitor, suggest that with his assistance the individual could obtain pecuniary compensation from the bus proprietors. Sometimes a doctor would be introduced for the purpose. After three or four of these more or less bogus claims had been made on the proprietors they "smelt a rat," and eventually the solicitor and one of his sons appeared at the Old Bailey, and were convicted of conspiracy, blackmail, or something of the kind. Having, in connection with my duties at the Law Courts, had some experience of the malpractices of this family, I was present at the trial, not only to satisfy my curiosity.

It never occurred to us in the old days that London needed "brightening," but now, comparing the London of to-day with that of the 'seventies and 'eighties, one realises how dull it must have seemed to foreigners, with

its drab buildings, old-fashioned shops, and the intense sombreness of its night-life. People who lived in London then did not lunch or dine at restaurants, so there were very few such places of any pretensions. Shopkeepers knew nothing of the art of window-dressing, and at night the streets were badly lit, almost dangerously so. On great occasions, such as the Prince of Wales' birthday, some of the big shops and commercial offices broke out into "illuminations," which were more costly than artistic. Now the modern street lighting for advertisement purposes has become so aggressively excessive that Sir Frank Dicksee seemed fully justified when he said, "Piccadilly Circus is at night the most vulgar place in Europe."

However, in some respects London was far "brighter" in the mid-Victorian days than now. Hyde Park every London Season afforded one of the most brilliant scenes of gaiety and beauty to be found in any city in the world. The afternoon parade in "The Drive" of smart Victorias, barouches and mail phaetons, moving slowly along in lines, with hundreds of lovely women in exquisite sartorial confections, most from Paris, is something to feel proud of having seen. And in "The Row"—"Rotten Row," as it was originally known—there was another display of English beauty. Both sexes dressed for riding in London with punctilious regard for fashion, and, uncomfortable as it may have been, the woman's attire was distinctly smart; the tight-fitting habit which showed off the bust to perfection—sometimes created it with the aid of padding—and the long, graceful skirt reaching to the feet (very dangerous, by the way, in case of a fall). The tall silk hat with a veil, the latter at one time so small that it only served as a trimming to the hat, seemed becoming at the time when it was in fashion; and the women sat their horses with an air of distinction. What a contrast to the dress-as-you-like, sometimes a cow-girl sort of kit, affected by the women one sees in the Row.

to-day. The men riding there invariably wore tall hats and tightly fitting trousers of invisible blue, with black braid down the sides.

The girl from the country, enjoying what she could of London Season without intimate participation in it, prided herself on knowing by sight London's most beautiful women, such as the Marchioness of Londonderry, the Countess of Dudley, Lord Faversham's three beautiful Duncombe daughters, and those widely advertised "Professional Beauties." No country girl aspiring to know anything about fashionable London would have dared to confess that she had never seen Mrs. Langtry, who in consequence had to put up with—perhaps she did not object—being followed about, at the Sunday Hyde Park "Church Parade," for instance, by crowds of celebrity-hunters, nearly all of her own sex. By the way, the Church Parade of those days was a far smarter affair than that of to-day. It differed from the scene in the Park on weekdays only in that the fashionable folk walked, more often meandered, instead of driving or riding.

A conspicuous figure in the Hyde Park "Drive" in the early 'seventies was a very expensively dressed woman of altogether striking appearance, in her splendidly horsed barouche. I used to wonder who she was, until one day a man more conversant with "gay life" than I was, remarked to me, "There goes Skittles." I knew her well by name and reputation through two books then enjoying a very considerable sale, entitled *Skittles in London* and *Skittles in Paris* (I fancy that there was a third—*Skittles in St. Petersburg*). She must have been the most world-famous courtesan of her time. In her choice of "admirers" she specialised in diplomats, from the highest to mere attachés, and of several nationalities. She lived sometimes in London, sometimes in St. Petersburg, chiefly in Paris. Although she was extravagant in her habits and therefore extremely

expensive to the particular "friend" of the moment, she never resorted to any mean trick to obtain money, like another of her class, Fanny Lear, who, when she was writing her book of adventures, demanded and obtained enormous amounts from distinguished men, particularly a Russian Grand Duke, in consideration of keeping their names out of it. Skittles was remarkably clever in other respects ; an enthusiastic student of politics and diplomacy ; and it was said that more than one young diplomat owed his advancement to her advice.

Among her most daring escapades was when, in Paris, she went to a smart bachelors' supper party, disguised as a man, and so successfully that no one there, except the host, was aware of her identity or sex. In a quarrel with one of the guests she insulted him, was challenged to a duel with swords, and accepted it. In a few days she had a suit of extraordinarily fine chain-armour made, and wore it under her man's suit for the duel. In vain her adversary thrust at her with his sword until, when her strength and nerve were exhausted, she collapsed in a faint. The doctor who went to her aid discovered the armour and her sex. One day, as I was passing Marshall and Snelgrove's with a friend, only a few years before the War, he stopped to speak to an old lady coming out of the shop to get into her brougham. When he rejoined me he told me that she was Mrs. Baillie, otherwise the once famous "Skittles," that she had been living for some years in a house in South Street, Mayfair, where she delighted in entertaining on Sunday afternoons young men of the Embassies and the Foreign Office, and relating her experiences of diplomacy in foreign capitals. He promised to take me to one of her Sunday receptions, but it happened that very soon afterwards I went out to the East. She died in 1920, at over eighty years of age.

This allusion to "Skittles" reminds me of another of her sort, but known only in London in the late 'eighties

and until a few years before the War. Through her striking personality and costly frocks and jewels she was a conspicuous figure in hotels, restaurants, and theatres, and her photos had a large sale, particularly among girls who probably knew little or nothing of her profession. I happened to have exclusive information as to Mrs. —'s origin. I could remember her as a remarkably good-looking domestic servant in the house of a West Country farmer in the early 'eighties. A couple of years ago I enquired from a friend, always well informed about celebrities of that sort, as to whether she was alive, and was surprised to learn that, at well over fifty years of age, she had married an elderly man of considerable means. Among the most conspicuous habitués of the Hyde Park "Drive" in those days was a distinguished-looking middle-aged couple of foreign appearance. She was always dressed in the latest Paris fashion ; his attire was equally immaculate, and their pair-horsed victoria was one of the smartest equipages in London. Very few of those whose curiosity they excited were aware that he was Monsieur Nicol, proprietor of the Café Royal, also owner of the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square. He left somewhere about a million when he died nearly twenty years ago. Madame Nicol carried on the business, and retained her interest in the Empire until she recently passed away.

Every season had its eccentric habitués of the Park. The most conspicuous of them, who lasted several Seasons, was a middle-aged, pathetic-looking woman dressed in white satin, with a crown of some cheap imitation silver material on her head. She imagined that she was the Queen of England ; but never insisted on any of the homage or privileges appertaining to the rank, content to walk up and down at the side of the Row with an air of dignified aloofness.

Four-in-hand coaches were in those days, and several years afterwards, a feature of every London Season,

and not only in Hyde Park. Alas! that that old and delightful spectacle provided by the assembly of smartly horsed coaches outside, and opposite, the White Horse Cellars in Piccadilly, before starting with their passengers for Brighton, Windsor and elsewhere, is a thing of the past. But, happily, the four-in-hand is still to be seen occasionally in the West End, and, in spite of motoring, the "meets" in Hyde Park of the two coaching clubs, although not so important as they were, still contribute to the gaiety of a London Season ; and those who love horses more than petrol may enjoy the sight of Mr. W. A. Barron driving his splendid coach-and-four, with passengers, every morning to Windsor, or somewhere in that direction. I recall the distinguished owner-driver as a rather red-haired little boy, with a very beautiful young mother, in their home in Westbourne Terrace. Herbert Barron, his father, was, I have always understood, the first member of the Stock Exchange, who had previously held a commission in the Army.

I used to see smart Society bachelors driving their cabriolets—hence the cab—a high, one-horsed conveyance with a hood, and a little platform behind it on which stood a diminutive groom, known as a "tiger," holding on to two straps for dear life. So large were the cabriolet's springs that the unfortunate lad was kept literally "on the jump" the whole time. And this reminds me of another unique means of locomotion in the West End. For several years in the 'seventies a lady was to be seen driving herself in a very smart carriage drawn by a pair of well-matched ponies, the vehicle being invariably preceded by a couple of immaculately appointed outriders, also on ponies. The owner of the remarkable equipage was a member of the celebrated Hope family. It was commonly reported at the time that she was compelled to maintain this expensive form of locomotion by the provisions of a certain will.

London's night-life in the 'seventies was not so dull as is supposed, although there were no dance-clubs or cabarets. True, its gaiety was monopolised by my own sex ; wives and sisters had not yet discovered the necessity of rushing out of the house nearly every evening after dinner in search of excitement. Men who, after leaving a theatre or music-hall, sought midnight diversion, with or without dancing, found it at the Argyll Rooms, the site of which is now occupied by the Trocadero Restaurant. There is more to be said about the place, which had a cosmopolitan reputation, than I wrote in my other book. Although it was patronised by the smartest "men about town" and frequented by the élite of the oldest profession in the world, it made no heavy call on the purse. Half-a-crown was the charge for admission, and, if lady acquaintances needed refreshment, as many usually did, a large brandy-and-soda, or a sherry-and-seltzer (a favourite beverage then) would cost only eighteenpence, and a bottle of quite passable champagne could be had for twelve shillings. It was not "correct" in those days to take dancing seriously anywhere, and, although the Argyll was primarily a dancing-hall and had one of the finest orchestras in London, men of the better class did not dance, except on Saturday nights. A strange distinction ! But a number of respectable young men and women, who danced industriously were admitted free for the purpose of justifying the *raison d'être* of the establishment. Apart from the inducement of female society, such as it was, "The Duke's," as the Argyll was generally known, was a favourite rendezvous of young men, particularly officers of both Services, who, on return from abroad would look in there in search of old friends. The women seldom wore evening dress, and those who did would not have dared appear in such a state of semi-nudity as has lately been the vogue among women of a more "respectable" class. Police "raids" were unknown, but every

night an inspector, with a sergeant, would pay a perfunctory visit with an air of benevolent interest. Only on special occasions, such as Boat Race or Derby nights, was there any rowdiness. It was understood that the place was closed through Queen Victoria's intervention. A great scandal was caused by a commanding officer of Household Cavalry being charged at Marlborough Street with disorderly conduct at the Argyll, and at the following licensing sessions the Middlesex Magistrates—the County Council had not come into existence—refused to renew the license.

The Argyll Rooms of my time had no connection with, but, doubtless intentionally took the name of, the much older Argyll Rooms in Regent Street where, about 1812, the cream of London Society attended balls before Almack's had come into existence.

Cremorne Gardens (near the far end of King's Road, Chelsea), with their dancing, suppers, lady patrons and illuminations, was in the summer months more or less a rival to the Argyll, and permitted more freedom. The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race was always celebrated there with something like an orgy. I have seen policemen, powerless to cope with the mob of boisterous young 'Varsity men, carried round the gardens on their shoulders. The Holborn Casino (since converted into the Holborn Restaurant) was another dancing-place, not so select as the "Duke's," and dancing was more general.

The Royal Westminster Aquarium, the site of which was acquired and built on by the Wesleyans more than twenty years ago, was another night resort of that period, having gradually degenerated from its original purpose. Its lady patrons were of a somewhat lower, but not humbler class than the habitués of the Argyll, or even the Cremorne, and so disgusted the occupants of the fish tanks which had figured largely in the original project of the Aquarium's promoters, that they—the fish, not the ladies—one by one sadly turned over on their backs

and passed away. Another favoured night rendezvous was in the supper-room of a restaurant in Piccadilly. In the daytime and evening, when our country cousins lunched or dined there, it was known by its normal description, the St. James Restaurant, but after, say, ten o'clock, when its character was transformed, it was "Jimmie's," and the ladies who forgathered there in search of free suppers were not country cousins.

In those days the "promenade" (the space at the back of the dress circle) of the Alhambra and Empire Theatres provided a remarkable, and far from edifying, exhibition in the dozens of females of various nationalities, who were a source of considerable profit to the shareholders, including parsons and old ladies, of the two concerns. In spite of strenuous opposition, the Middlesex Magistrates and their successors, the County Council, for many years renewed the licenses. In comparatively recent times the Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden Opera House, intended to provide good music for the general public, were for several years utilised extensively by women of the underworld; and the Covent Garden Fancy Dress Balls of the early 'nineties were very gay affairs in their time.

The most disreputable of the night resorts open to the public in my young days was at the back of a house in Leicester Square. The main attraction of the Judge and Jury was a mock trial, based on some recent case in the Law Courts, the nature of which had seemed to prurient minds to provide material for a skit which depended for its humour on indecencies.

Undoubtedly the man who always played the Judge, and was part proprietor of the enterprise, possessed a remarkably ready wit which might have been better utilised. Counsel and witnesses, all paid for their services, took their cues from him. The "trial" was followed after midnight by an exhibition on a stage of *poses plastiques*, in which women of unpleasantly coarse physique displayed themselves in badly fitting fleshings.

My first, and last, visit to the Judge and Jury more than satisfied my curiosity. Among my friends I never knew of one who paid the place a second visit.

Long before the restaurant habit had asserted itself, Londoners regarded it as a sort of adventure to explore Soho in search of gastronomic novelty. It was in the early 'seventies that Edmund Yates, proprietor of the *World*, discovered Kettner's and told his readers about the excellence of its cuisine and its moderate charges. I remember, when passing through London on my way back to Rugby after the summer holiday, being taken there by my father, who, having travelled rather widely, could appreciate good foreign cookery. The Soho restaurants were hardly known to Londoners when many of us were already acquainted with a then nearly new foreign restaurant in the Strand. At first we lunched or dined at Gatti's as much to study the foreign element on which it mainly depended as to get good continental cooking ; but later on we found, as others have done since, that the place provided as excellent a rump-steak or mutton-chop as any Englishman could desire. The two brothers, who founded and owned it, Stefano and Angustino Gatti (familiarly named "Stephanotis" and "Angostura") were well-known to most of their patrons. From the hour of opening until closing-time one or both of them sat at a table in the centre of the big room and inspected every dish before it was served to the customer. The two Gattis of the present generation have hitherto strictly adhered to this practice, but I have just heard that they are disposing of the restaurant to a company, or something of that kind. In the late 'eighties I more than once visited Gatti's on the off-chance of witnessing a murder. Major Le Caron, the famous "informer" who had recently given evidence against a notorious gang of Irish political assassins, used to dine there regularly. It was anticipated that an attempt would be made on his life, and he was constantly guarded by an armed detective.

I made his acquaintance one evening through my friend, Chief-Inspector Littlechild, of the "Special Branch," who occasionally took on the job instead of his subordinates, finding his protégé a very interesting companion. Le Caron, a strikingly handsome man, lithe and dapper although over sixty years of age, seemed quite indifferent as regards his fate; and he died a natural death.

Not more than three of the eight well-known West-End chop houses which I occasionally used are still existing. Very few of the present patrons of Stone's Chop-House, in Panton Street, can be aware that in the 'nineties its wine-room was a regular meeting place at certain hours of the day of a little coterie of actors, journalists, artists and a few others. Going further back, when I was at the Law Courts there was a famous resort in Fleet Street. In a large room of a public-house, close to one of the entrances to the Temple, "The Temple Discussion Forum" used to hold its political debates every Saturday evening of the winter months. The proceedings were conducted with House of Commons decorum and some of its formalities, but smoking—often churchwarden pipes—and liquid refreshment were more than permitted. Among those who took part in the debates, almost all barristers, I recall Montague Williams, Serjeant Ballantine, Douglas Straight, Hardinge Giffard (afterwards Lord Halsbury) Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen), and, I think, Poland (now Sir Harry Poland). Doubtless there were others, whose names were of no importance at that time, but who later on probably sat in Parliament; it was regarded as a good practice-ground for budding politicians.

Apropos of chop-houses, it is perhaps almost forgotten that the Cock, in Fleet Street, with its very old wooden "boxes," was for over a century on the other side of the street. I often lunched there, and remember watching the process of removal when the former site was acquired

for the Law Courts Branch of the Bank of England, and the furniture and fittings and the old sign were transferred to what had been known as the Rifle Gallery, a licensed house with a very long bar, which in the old days was used for rifle-shooting.

As I have mentioned in a previous chapter, I can go back to the original Whiteley's when the business was carried on in two small shops in Westbourne Grove. It grew rapidly until about a dozen houses were insufficient, and premises were built in Queen's Road. In the earlier stage of its career one of the departments was managed by John Barker—I recall his personal appearance as well as that of his chief—whose name is now famous throughout the country. I can also remember the opening, in the early 'seventies, of the Army and Navy Stores on the site which they now occupy.

I never hear of any haunted houses in London in these days. There used to be several; one in particular in Berkeley Square, which, in spite of its being said to possess a ghost, several brave persons, tempted by the low rent and the good position, from time to time occupied, always vacating it after a short tenancy. There were "mystery" houses, too, with no definite legend attached to them. One of these was a big square house in the Bayswater Road, opposite the entrance to Kensington Palace Gardens, with a two-acre garden surrounded by high walls. For some twenty years it stood absolutely empty, the windows covered with dust, and the garden, with several old fruit trees, run wild. On the door in the front wall was a discoloured brass plate on which the inscription, "Dr. Davidson," could be barely deciphered. Drivers of the buses which passed the house invented gruesome stories about it for the benefit of their outside passengers. On the death in the 'sixties of Dr. Davidson, at one time a well-known local medical practitioner, his property was the subject of proceedings in Chancery, which lasted twenty years. It was not

until they came to an end that the house could be disposed of, or even inhabited. It was then pulled down, and a block of modern residences built on the site. I was personally interested in another "mystery" house, also in, or at any rate seen from, the Bayswater Road. On the roof of 21 Hyde Park Gardens was a strange big square erection of glass, said to contain a coffin with a corpse. It happened that the house belonged to a relation of mine, one of whose tenants put up the place in order to sit there and enjoy an unbroken view across Hyde Park. It was removed only a few years ago. In more than one published account of London's "mystery" houses this story of that particular house, apparently invented by bus drivers, has been told quite seriously.

In my boyhood days there were several well-known and well-patronised hawkers in the West End, each with his, or her, own particular "cry." One in particular was the "brandy-ball man" (the only one of the kind), who, wearing an always clean white apron and a red tasselled fez, carried a tray with two kinds of sweets, brandy-balls and peppermint bulls-eyes. He used to visit our street regularly, one evening in every week, and I looked forward to his arrival. He announced his coming with the strangest street-cry ever heard ; it took the form of a song in which he extolled the quality of his wares, and he sang it with a pure falsetto voice. The voice was afterwards accounted for. Shortly before he died in hospital a few years ago it was discovered that the brandy-ball "man" was a woman.

It may interest many casual visitors to Hampstead Heath to know that the big public-house, Jack Straw's Castle (not long since a favourite resort of Marie Lloyd), was centuries ago the home of Jack Straw, one of the leaders of Wat Tyler's rebellion. I remember it when, forty years ago, it was an hotel patronised by some of the London "gentry" in search of bracing air for luncheon

or dinner, or even for temporary residence. Going further from London, I have enjoyed several thoroughly Cockney outings at Rosherville Gardens, just outside Gravesend. Its patrons usually got there by special steamers from London Bridge, sometimes Westminster Bridge. The principal attraction was always dancing, and the two principal lines of the proprietor's advertisement never varied from year to year: "The Place to Spend a Happy Day," "Dancing All Day Long in the Old Baronial Hall." The outstanding feature of the "gardens" (an old chalk pit by the river-side), was an array of rather crude statues which by degrees fell into a state of dismal deterioration. North Woolwich Gardens, which, when I knew them, were owned by the famous "People's Caterer," Bill Holland, also provided dancing as well as other forms of entertainment for Cockney pleasure-seekers. Among these the "Baby Show" and "Barmaids' Show" were annual events. This reminds me of the gradual disappearance in the past twenty or thirty years of the young women of strikingly good appearance who used to serve drinks from behind the bars of West End and City restaurants, even of mere taverns. Doubtless most of that class of alluring femininity find more profitable employment in smart West End shops, as chorus or "show" girls in theatres, or as typists in offices. The most handsome barmaids in my young days were those of the New York (now the Holborn) Restaurant, after an American restaurant manager acquired the premises of the Holborn Casino, to which I have already referred. He boasted of having the longest bar in the world. It was in the form of an oval so that the length of the space occupied was only about half that of the bar itself, and some thirty young women of abnormally attractive personality provided liquid refreshment, and often very familiar conversation for impressionable men—not always young—possessing more money than brains.

Ladies of the upper and middle classes did not find it necessary in my young days to take their afternoon tea in restaurants, and men seldom indulged in it anywhere. The genesis of the modern London tea-shop was in the opening, in 1892, by Lyons and Co. in Piccadilly (just where one of their depots flourishes to-day) of a handsomely decorated glorified bun-shop in which tea, coffee and cakes were served by tall and particularly good-looking young women with smart black frocks and dainty aprons, and hair dressed (by a professional hair-dresser, it was understood) in a very becoming fashion. I was there on the opening day. The original "black-and-white girls" disappeared one by one; possibly, as the clientele of the establishment in its early days included many young men of means, attracted by the serving-ladies, some of the latter are now hostesses of country houses with sons and daughters who ride to hounds.

## CHAPTER IV

### MODES, MANNERS AND MORALS

As regards fashions in dress, my sex-disqualification precludes any instructive details as to what well-dressed women wore thirty or forty years ago. But I know that the crinoline, with its inconveniences, was still in fashion in the mid-'sixties, and that for many years afterwards the main object of the fashions seemed to be to conceal the lines of the figure and the lower limbs ; but, on the other hand, the *décolletage* of the front of evening gowns, particularly those of young married women, in the 'eighties and 'nineties, would shock the woman of to-day who has lately been baring her back to the waist. It is only the difference between back and front, and in that "Miss 1925" did not object to her naked flesh being handled by her partner in a dance. To the present generation the dress of thirty or forty years ago must appear uncomfortable and almost ridiculous, but fashion justifies anything. The first tendency to comfort was in the introduction of the tea-gown, since known as a rest-gown, for evening wear when "full dress" (or undress) was not necessary. This originated in hunting-circles, to dispense with the corset and ease the wearer's body after strenuous riding ; the fashion was soon followed by all women of the upper and, even middle class.

In men's dress there have been remarkably few changes in fifty years, except in mere details. Prince Edward of Wales, in his time, originated such as there were. The frock-coat (now never seen) has had three distinct reigns

in my life, each of about ten years. Its last period ended about 1900. The "squash" hat for evening dress (originally known as an "opera hat" or a "Gibus") has also enjoyed three distinct periods of favour. When the frock-coat was worn last it was a recognised custom (initiated by the then Prince of Wales) to wear it only in the afternoon, while before lunch only the black cut-away coat (still known as a "morning coat") was worn. Officers of the Household Brigade were required to follow this custom as strictly as if it had been one of the King's Regulations. The drawback to the frock-coat is that it requires a good figure and a very good tailor. Many men who would wish to be in the fashion have neither.

For a very brief period in the early 'eighties an attempt was made to introduce a jacket-suit of black, or some very dark colour, worn with the tall hat. A deep olive hue was particularly favoured. I was proud possessor of a suit of that colour, but lost all interest in it after one day going to the assistance of a policeman who had met more than his match in a drunken chimney-sweep. A very decided innovation in evening dress was when, in 1896, the Prince (Edward) of Wales appeared in a white waistcoat of Spitalfields patterned silk, with the object of encouraging the Spitalfields silk industry. In a couple of weeks, in spite of their high price, most men who professed to be in the fashion were wearing them. Even I bought a couple, just before sailing for New York, where it was "paragraphed" as the very latest thing from London. A few months afterwards when I returned home, I found my Spitalfields waistcoats conspicuously *démodés*. Every cheap tailor had been supplying his customers with obviously poor imitations of the original, and young men of limited means and no social pretensions were wearing them, generally with red (!) silk pocket handkerchiefs.

Towards the end of the 'eighties the smoking-jacket

arrived, usually made of coloured silk, and often with military "frogs" of braid across the front. Although they were originally intended only for the smoking-room after dinner, many of their possessors wore them when dining at home in the family circle. One of the many stories about Captain Bay Middleton, one of the finest riders of his time, who several hunting seasons piloted the Empress of Austria in the Shires, related to the smoking-jacket fashion. In country houses, after the ladies had retired to rest—at an earlier hour than they would now—the men usually exchanged their dress-coats for smoking-jackets. Bay Middleton, when guest of a certain lady of title, made a point of appearing in the smoking-room at night in his dress-coat, just to assert his independence. One night another of the guests, a well-known man in the hunting field, told him that if he did it again his coat-tails would be cut off. The next night when "Bay" turned up dressed as usual, two of the other men seized him and held him while a third cut off the tails. Middleton lit a cigar and smoked as calmly as if nothing unusual had happened. "You don't seem to care a damn, Bay," the man who had done the cutting remarked. "Why should I?" the supposed victim replied, "it's your coat, not mine. I got it from your room after you had changed." The smoking-jacket was closely followed by the dinner-jacket, a comfortable substitute for the tail-coat on certain occasions; and it came to stay. For country wear the Norfolk jacket—the parent of what is now described by the popular tailor as a Sports jacket—arrived in 1871.

Years before well-dressed London men discarded the tall hat, except for very special occasions, most of them in the summer wore a tall grey hat, often with a black band. There are three or four who still wear it. I observed last summer that Lord Arthur Hill had stuck to the fashion of his much earlier days. By the way,



A MODE OF THE LATE 'SEVENTIES.  
(The wearer was then one of the best dressed members of  
London "Society.")

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about thirty years ago a good-looking and always immaculately dressed well-known member of the Stock Exchange, Panmure Gordon, used regularly to visit his hatter on Saturdays to obtain a new tall hat, except in August and September, when it was a bowler (then known as a "billycock"). He was equally extravagant with other articles of clothing, so that two rooms of his mansion in Carlton House Terrace were devoted to his wearing apparel. And Panmure Gordon had other peculiarities. When he had reached a very prosperous stage of his commercial career he acquired Etty's famous "Judgment of Paris" and hung it in his dining-room; but, fearing to offend the eyes of lady guests, he had the three nude figures draped by a painter in watercolours. I actually saw it after the operation. Of course he knew that whenever he required to dispose of the picture the three ladies' temporary coverings could be washed off without hurting the oil-painting.

Among my sartorial reminiscences I recollect that, as part of the night attire of those days, my mother wore a frilled nightcap tied under the chin, and my father a soft coneshaped cap, also white, pulled down over the head, with a tassel on top. Pyjamas did not "come in" in England until about 1880, and at first were obtainable only at one shop, in the Haymarket, which stocked them for customers from India where they were always worn. In my young days few women ventured to "make up" their faces; in fact most of them did not need it. Those who were more daring depended almost exclusively on "rouge," and a "rouged woman" was a term of opprobrium, which, if not justified, would certainly have entitled a plaintiff in a libel or slander case to a verdict. But there were supposed to be more secretive methods, as proved by the celebrated trial of "Madame Rachel," who obtained enormous sums for making, or promising to make, unattractive Society women's faces—in her own words—"beautiful for ever."

When I was a boy, and later, side whiskers were very generally worn by men, often without moustaches ; no professional man, lawyer, doctor or parson wore a moustache. Army officers were required to leave at least four inches under the chin bare, and most officers of the Guards, and other crack regiments, wore their whiskers much shorter, and curled. By the way, the Army regulation prescribing that no officer or soldier should wear a beard was at one time ignored by, or specially waived in favour of four officers, the Prince of Wales (King Edward), Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Colonel (better known as General) Evelyn Wood, and Captain FitzGeorge (one of the Duke of Cambridge's sons), last owing to his suffering from a skin trouble.

In my early smoking days the habit was in many houses barely tolerated by wives and mothers. The smoking-room was not a recognised institution in Town and country houses, and in some of the latter, where there was no billiard-room, smokers had to retire to the saddle-room or butler's pantry. And we would have no more dared "light up" in a drawing-room than sit on a drawing-room fire.

One can hardly realise in these times of motoring that about thirty years ago "the best people" of both sexes rode what are now known as "push bikes," in Town as well as the country. It was one of the diversions for country-house hostesses and their guests to make up a party to ride out on their bikes on a visit to some other country house, and the bicycle was a recognised item of a country-house visitor's baggage. In London for two Seasons bicycling in Battersea Park was "the thing," and people made up parties to lunch, or even breakfast, at the then well-patronised restaurant in the Park, the existence of which is now ignored.

The present-day custom of women riding their horses astride is not such a novelty as is often supposed. In the

hunting-field it started with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. I remember how, about 1881, two ladies, one of them the wife of Macbeth, the well-known painter, astonished the rest of the field, and shocked some of them, by appearing at a meet in men's saddles and breeches. (I have always maintained that the man's saddle is safer than, and otherwise preferable to the side-saddle for women.) I remember, too, how about that time a lady, a remarkably fine shot, wife of a retired officer who then lived in the Exmoor country, shocked the country-side by going out shooting in knickerbockers. Nicholas Snow, the once famous Exmoor farmer and Master of the pack of foxhounds then known as the "Stars of the West," protested to the husband in language so uncomplimentary to the wife that the dapper little ex-cavalryman and the burly farmer fought with their fists until both were exhausted.

I recently saw a certain young lady of title referred to by a newspaper as the "pioneer" of the fashion of shop-keeping among Society women, which seemed an uncomplimentary estimate of her age. I remember in her pretty drawing-room in Green Street, in 1889, hearing from Lady Granville Gordon (wife of handsome "Granny" Gordon, the original "gentleman bookie") all about her shopkeeping project. She created almost a sensation in Society by, as Madame Lierre, starting a millinery business in Mayfair. The then Princess of Wales was among her first customers, and some of the cream of the aristocracy purchased her hats. But after two years or so, many of her customers having been more ready to buy than to settle their accounts, the venture had to be given up. Seven years later she died under tragic circumstances. In the early 'nineties Mrs. Pocklington opened her millinery and dressmaking business in Grafton Street, and had a very fashionable clientele. Being discriminate as to whom she gave

credit, her business prospered ; but when it was at its best she died, after a long illness. About that time Lady Duff-Gordon, still a leading authority on women's dress, became associated with the famous Madame Elise (wife of Mr. Isaacson, M.P.), and later on was Lucille's directress and principal designer.

The "Professional Beauty" of the late 'seventies has no equivalent in these days. It was an institution peculiar to its time, created primarily by the then Prince of Wales' marked patronage of certain ladies, partly by the "Society Paper," another peculiar institution of those days, which gave the ladies free advertisement, and very largely by photographers who made small fortunes out of specialising in Society "beauties" and broadcasting their pictures, which accounts for the designation "professional." Mrs. Langtry, whose interesting and discreetly written book of reminiscences has forestalled me in several stories which I might have told, was of course the doyenne of the "P.B.'s," and her unexpected entry into the theatrical profession gave her additional publicity. She was, as she is now, a keen sportswoman, and, incidentally, an excellent swimmer. Her famous *White Lady*, the most palatial steam yacht ever seen in the Solent up to that time, must have cost the donor a fabulous amount. Mrs. Langtry sold her in the late 'nineties for an almost ridiculously low sum. The *White Lady* proved to be a "white elephant." Eventually she was purchased by the Malay Federated Government, and used as a survey vessel until 1912, when she struck a rock and sank. For many months afterwards passengers by British India boats between Rangoon and Singapore (including myself) were shown portions of the two masts above water.

"Society" (with the capital S) no longer signifies what it did. Anything like Almack's Balls (before my time), with their severe exclusiveness, would now be impossible. To obtain admission to one of them was the highest

ambition of those who were, or hoped to be, "in Society." Even members of the aristocracy and officers of the Brigade of Guards sometimes failed to pass muster with the Committee composed of titled ladies. The nearest equivalent in recent times has been the annual Caledonian Ball. People claiming to be "in Society" now are frequently without breeding, manners or culture. Too often the London drawing-room which formerly would have been accessible only to the (actually) "best people" is now crowded with all sorts and kinds who can put on a smart appearance and converse with a freedom impossible in the old days; in many cases they are introduced by a daughter of the house who is incapable of any discrimination in the choice of her friends. And the old London mansions in which the hostesses of the highest rank have entertained are fast disappearing. This started with the demolition, some forty years ago, of the Duke of Northumberland's imposing mansion (the site now occupied by the Grand Hotel) at Charing Cross; and the (true) story is almost forgotten of the huge crowd collected by a practical joker who declared that he had just seen the stone lion on the top of the building wag his tail. To come to the present day, Devonshire House, where a Duchess of Devonshire used to hold famous receptions, has just been ruthlessly demolished. Stafford House, once famous for a Duchess of Sutherland's hospitality, is now converted into a museum. A millionaire American shopkeeper is the present occupant of Lansdowne House, and the Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor House is for sale. One waits anxiously to learn the fate of Apsley House, once the home of the "Iron Duke," at Hyde Park Corner, and of, farther away, Holland House, where Lady Holland gave her historical dinners which sometimes included most of the Cabinet of the day.

I sometimes wonder sadly how long it will be before a New York syndicate converts Buckingham Palace into

a block of plutocrat flats, or a Chicago multi-millionaire takes up his residence in the Albert Hall, and plays the "Yankee Doodle" on the famous organ with one finger. We have already got as far as the Duke and Duchess of York having, in order to obtain a suitable place of residence in London, to be tenants of a New York millionairess. And outside London we have to contemplate the acquisition of the hereditary homes of some of our oldest families by people who not many years ago would not have known how to behave at a dinner-table. Recently a man, with whom I am indirectly acquainted, had occasion to visit on a matter of business one of the new plutocrats of humble origin who, having made a gigantic fortune during, and mostly out of, the War, had purchased an historical country estate and taken up his residence in its mansion. The visitor arrived not long after breakfast-time, and, considering the hour, was surprised to be ushered into the sumptuous drawing-room, where he found the new lord and master entertaining some male guests of his own calibre with liquid refreshment in the form of bottled stout. The contents of one of the bottles had found its way on to a beautiful and priceless carpet..

Although I can recall the joys of a "London Season" back to the 'seventies, I am not one of the "old fogies" who disparage the present in favour of the past. But, like others who saw life in those days and are not yet on the shelf, I am more amused than annoyed at the silly and misleading comparisons by ill-informed writers between the opportunities and characteristics of "Miss 1926" and those of the girl of what is referred to contemptuously as the "Mid-Victorian" era. Such people know nothing about "Miss 1880." The girls of those days had a jolly good time, and I enjoyed it with them, although they were not as bare-faced, or bare-backed, as some of the modern type, and did not paint their lips or cultivate terms of easy intimacy with "dancing

partners," men of any or no reputation. Dancing was then an evening recreation, not a day-and-night craze, and a man who specialised in it was regarded by other men, and by most of his partners, as a nincompoop. Waltzing predominated, and is happily coming into fashion again. Compared with it, the polka, also much danced at that time, was a rather tame affair, as I realised some four years ago when I danced it with the bride (in her national costume) at a Polish peasant's wedding in Upper Silesia. And how divinely the "Mid-Victorian" girl waltzed! And how delightful she was to look upon, any red on her cheeks denoting only the flush of exuberance! And in the daytime how bewitching; for instance, in Hyde Park on a Season afternoon as she sat at her mother's side in one of those smart little carriages known as a *victoria*, or, as I remember her in Rotten Row, in the riding-kit of the period, which showed off her figure to perfection! To see her flirt was fascinating, and when she was in love—well, it was a poem.

She played no golf, hockey, or polo, only because girls had not then thought of playing any of them, but in the early Mid-Victorian years she could use a pair of sculls on the Thames, and was just starting lawn-tennis; and she was as good a horsewoman as "Miss 1926." If she wore tight-laced corsets it was for the same reason as the girl of to-day pinches her hips—a matter of fashion. True, there were more restrictions than now, but "Miss 1880" did not seem to mind them. Her enjoyment of life was not marred because it was "not the thing" for girls to ride alone in a hansom cab. Parents had some voice in their daughters' choice of their husbands, with the result that Society divorce cases provided useful material for the newspapers far more rarely than now, and there were many more really happy marriages. The self-respect, a marked characteristic of the girl of those times, encouraged a man's respect for her, which was

good for both ; and she was just as happy without that “enlightenment” on which the modern girl prides herself, sometimes ostentatiously.

However, old as I am, I find much in the London girl of to-day that is delightful ; many of them just as healthy and wholesome as the girls of my youth. I enjoy her intelligent conversation, and admire the spirit of independence with which she entertains friends of either sex at a restaurant, or steers her car through the bewildering maze of street traffic. There is something attractively characteristic in the firmness of her step, and even in the air of haughty contempt with which she returns the impudent stare of some man in a public place, and when she addresses me as “Old Bean,” I almost love her.

But there is also the other type, a vicious aftermath of the War. Writers who have resented reflections on the modern girl have, perhaps unwittingly, championed the cocktail-swilling, shameless product of the night-club—young females who, in spite of respectable connections, have by their methods of asserting their freedom fully deserved their nickname, “the betwixt-and-betweens,” and whose—not always correctly termed—“platonic week-ends” have become nearly a recognised institution in their own circle. Happily that particular circle, conspicuous as it is now in the West End, is not representative of the average Society girl of to-day.

This new “freedom,” apart from its tendency to develop into licentiousness, has brought about an unnatural separation between parent and child. The abolition of the chaperon need not have involved that of the mother. The old relations of tender affection between daughter and mother are regarded as out of fashion, even “Victorian,” by many girls of to-day, who assume a defensive, if not actually offensive, attitude towards a parent who ventures to put a necessary check on their “freedom.” But, happily, there are many young women left who treat their parents with respect,

even if they address their mothers only by their Christian names and their fathers as "Old Boy." And it is satisfactory to find that there are still girls, even of the "upper" circles, who do not scoff at the idea of being "in love," and therefore do not miss the most glorious experience in a woman's life, or a man's.

The old-fashioned Sabbath, say of the 'seventies, was admittedly a rather tiresome ordeal. There were no Sunday concerts, not even a band in any of the Parks. The only form of recreation was provided by a visit to the Zoo, which required a "Fellows' Voucher," as it does to-day. But we did not make a grievance of it all; because we knew nothing better—or worse. In those days the upper and middle classes in London went to church as a matter of course without any profession of godliness, and there were certain places of worship always fashionably frequented. Now there are about four London preachers who can fill their churches with such congregations; then there were well over a dozen, such as Canon Liddon, at St. Paul's, Canon Duckworth, in Hamilton Terrace, Henry White, at the Savoy, Canon Scott-Holland, in Quebec Street, Boyd Carpenter, Capel Molyneux, in Onslow Gardens, and "Reggie" Haweis, that quaint little, rather theatrical, person, who used sometimes to perform on his violin in the pulpit of Welbeck Street Chapel.

On the other side of the river Spurgeon filled his Tabernacle with a mixed congregation, and all classes flocked to Her Majesty's Theatre (the old building) every evening of four weeks in the 'seventies to hear Moody and Sankey, the world-famous American revivalists. By the way, during that period of revivalism some of its preachers were not quite sincere. A negro missioner, also from America, put up a huge tent on some waste land near Kensal Green, and filled it entirely

with men and women of the working class. A conspicuously regular attendant at his services was a woman who always seemed deeply impressed. A few months after the missioner had left London she gave birth to a child which was more black than white. The subject was seriously discussed from the scientific point of view, even in one of the medical journals, and later on the mystery was solved by the husband's successful divorce proceedings, in which the negro preacher was co-respondent. In these days religion is generally a subject for scientific research and debate and of sensational articles in the daily Press. Recently *Punch* depicted a parson asking a little girl, "Why does not your little brother come to Sunday School, my dear?" "Mother don't want him to take up religion yet, sir," was the reply.

If this modern indifference to the religion of the old and healthy sort is the cause or effect of the present-day laxity of morals, there can be no doubt that there was far less immorality among the upper and middle class of women thirty or forty years ago than there is now. What there was of it in "respectable" society was monopolised by some, but by no means all of what was known as the "Smart Set," and other folk who sought to imitate it. There were a few country houses, notably that of a certain baronet's wife, which specialised in the very free and easy habits of their guests. Society divorce trials in the 'seventies and 'eighties were few and far between. The first that I can remember was the Mordaunt Case, in which I was interested only because I was then at school with the lady's brother. It was the most sensational case of the kind in my time, owing to Sir Thomas Mordaunt citing, as co-respondent, the Prince (Edward) of Wales, who went into the witness-box and denied the charge. Lady Mordaunt was one of the most beautiful women of that period, sister of that famous beauty, the Countess of Dudley. Another sensational divorce trial

was the Colin Campbell Case of the early 'eighties, in which a duke's son was the petitioner and a very beautiful young Society woman respondent ; and the four co-respondents were a duke, the Chief of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, a very distinguished military officer and a well-known medical practitioner. The petitioner failed to prove his case, and the ducal co-respondent, on his death a few years later, left the respondent a legacy of considerable value ; but his estate was, I understood, insufficient to produce the whole amount.

It may be an exaggeration to say that the up-to-date bride has one eye on the altar and the other on the Divorce Court, but it suggests the attitude of a certain type of Society woman. A few months ago *Punch* depicted a young woman, just divorced, complaining bitterly to a friend that she might just as well have not been divorced at all, as the papers were too full of murder cases to give her a chance. I observe that divorce has become a sort of speciality ; it runs through families like red hair, stage-acting, party politics or drink. Although my associations are not exceptionally degenerate, I could tell amazing—to the uninitiated—stories of family mix-ups and of women, rich in amours, divorcing amenable husbands, and vice versa. And in milder categories, even of Mid-Victorian days, the general public has had no idea of the scandals which have been avoided in connection with divorce cases. One instance : some years ago a member of one of the oldest aristocratic families, with whom I was acquainted, started divorce proceedings against his wife, and there might have been at least half-a-dozen co-respondents. A wealthy, happily married man of—so far as his friends knew—unblemished character and of apparently strong religious inclinations, was to have been one of them. The evidence against him was amply sufficient. The petitioner, in spite of his family connections, possessed limited means and was not

in a position to provide for a divorced wife, as he would otherwise have wished to do. His solicitor, on his own responsibility, interviewed the man referred to before serving the citation on him, with the result that he settled a considerable amount on the lady, his name was withdrawn from the citation, and his reputation remained as good as ever. Thus, not only was the woman provided for, but the man's wife was saved the misery of a horrible awakening.

On the other hand, there have been remarkable cases of an innocent man being dragged into the Divorce Court. My sex cannot be too careful in their relations with married women of easy habits, of which I can furnish a useful example. When I was fairly young, but, I believe, no fool, I had to pay a flying visit to a fashionable seaside resort on a matter of business. I was uncertain as to which hotel I would stay at and was in the lounge of one of them, intending, at any rate, to lunch there, when a young married woman whom I knew well in London as remarkably attractive and unscrupulously "dangerous," drove up from the station. She suggested that we should lunch together, which we did, and she told me that her husband was in Paris on business and that she had come down to — "for a bit of fun." I had a good idea of what her "fun" might be and, as I did not propose to figure in the Divorce Court, as soon as we had finished lunch I fetched my luggage from the station, drove to another hotel, booked and occupied a room, and made a point of writing my name and the date in the visitors' book. A couple of months later I heard from an acquaintance of the lady's husband that he was divorcing her, that a friend of hers with whom she had been seen at — was to have been the co-respondent, but there was no certain evidence that he had stayed at the same hotel, so another of her friends would monopolise the distinction. The case was one of the *causes célèbres* of the time, and the co-respondent subsequently married



A DISTINGUISHED "BRIGHTON BEAUTY"  
In a dress worn at one of the then famous Brighton Fancy  
Dress Balls.

[p. 74]



the lady. The result, so far as he was concerned, was not idyllic.

But, thank Heaven, there are still married women, even among the "new rich," who would shudder at the thought of figuring in the Divorce Court, whether as respondent, intervener, or even petitioner. And there are lots of Society mothers who appreciate the responsibilities of motherhood ; unlike the ultra-fashionable woman who (according to a story), when asked by a new acquaintance who was calling on her, how many children she had, professed ignorance and sent for her head nurse. "We had five, madam," was the reply, "but Master Plantaganet got under a motor-car this morning. I quite forgot to mention it ! "

Before it was fashionable to winter in the Riviera well-to-do London folk, including many of the upper ten, used, every November, to transfer themselves and their establishments from the West End to their Brighton houses, or houses hired for the Brighton Season, a term which conveyed something quite different to what it does now. In those days, during the winter, King's Road was almost a repetition of the Drive in Hyde Park, with its smart women in their London carriages. Dinner parties and dances were given every evening, and on Sundays the Church Parade on the Front was a reproduction of the same function in London. One Sunday afternoon, a few years ago, I sat on the Brighton Front with an elderly, but still attractive, lady whom I knew when, and have known since, she was the most distinguished of the Brighton beauties in the 'seventies and early 'eighties. We recalled those old delightful scenes and the men and women who participated in them, reminding one another of the splendidly horsed carriages of the old days as we contemplated unsightly motor vehicles tearing up or down King's Road with untidy passengers looking as if their only object in life was to get somewhere or another in the least possible time.

Apart from its convenience as a means of locomotion and transport, and having disfigured the face of town and country, motoring has obviously revolutionised the dress, habits and manners of the class which can—or think they can—afford to indulge in it. It has produced a new type, almost a new race of human beings, as I realise when an aggressively pompous woman, who, when her 100 h.p. "Dernier Cri" has nearly knocked me down, stares at me with a "You-see-what-money-can do" expression on her powder-smothered physiognomy.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME PRESS EXPERIENCES

WHEN reviewing my *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian* for the *Graphic*, James Milne, whose opinion is worthy of respect, regretted that I had not included more of my newspaper experiences. Now I am acting on his suggestion, although fully conscious of being far less qualified to write about Fleet Street than men who have lived most of their lives there. I have done little more than, after leaving the Law Courts (with a small "abolition of office" pension) at over thirty years of age, pay it intermittent visits, either as member of an editorial staff or as a "freelance." But I have never deliberately treated journalism as a stop-gap, because I love it. It has been through force of circumstances, not through any fault of mine, that at two junctures I had to avail myself of an opportunity of, as I thought, obtaining more permanent employment. I must expect to be described as a "rolling stone," but I protest against being classed among those which "gather no moss."

Now, at an age when I ought to be "on the shelf"—perhaps one of the shelves of a crematorium—I find that Fleet Street requires younger men, younger only in actual years; but I am as interested in the activities and methods of the Press of to-day as of my day, and occasionally am persuaded that my pen is not yet worn out when I receive a welcome cheque—strange to say, almost invariably from papers the editors of which have not known me in the past.

My recollections of newspapers of the past do not

carry me so far back as the *London Post*, born in 1794, nor even to the birth of the first London penny paper, the *Daily Telegraph*, which coincided within a few weeks with my own. But I remember in the 'sixties John Bright's *Morning Star* (edited by Justin McCarthy), with which the more modern *Star* of to-day has no connection. When I was a child I was, weather permitting, taken twice a day for exercise in Kensington Gardens. At that time there was a very short-lived tramway between Notting Hill Gate and the Marble Arch, and on the top boards of the cars were advertisements of the *Morning Star*. Otherwise I took no interest whatever in John Bright's journalistic venture; but, in spite of my indifference, it lasted some dozen years.

In 1870 London had only five morning, and two evening papers; a year later the two became three by the appearance of the *Echo*; and about ten years later the *Clerkenwell News*, originally a local weekly paper, was converted into a daily—the *Daily Chronicle*. The *Echo*, the pioneer of halfpenny evening newspapers, was distinguished by its enterprising methods (never of the sensational order) and its high literary quality and political integrity during the seventeen years of Arthur Arnold's editorship. After he vacated the editorial chair, on Baron Grant acquiring the property, it gradually fell into decline, in spite of Passmore Edwards, its last editor, who fought valiantly to keep it alive.

I rely on my memory in saying that between 1890 and 1895 there were ten evening papers (five at a penny and five at a halfpenny), only three of which now exist. The *Evening Post* and *Sun* disappeared, the *St. James* was absorbed by the *Evening Standard*, the *Westminster Gazette* was converted into a morning paper, the *Globe* was absorbed by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and three years ago the latter, after a one-time brilliant career, died a sudden death. There have been less casualties among the morning papers. The *Standard*, once the recognised

organ of Toryism, died of senile decay, and the *Tribune*, a particularly fine effort of journalism, when it seemed to be making good headway with its circulation, succumbed to want of capital ; the *Morning Leader*, a smartly conducted Radical paper, was absorbed by the *Daily News*, and the *Morning*, the pioneer of halfpenny morning papers in London, missed its opportunity through mismanagement ; and soon afterwards Alfred Harmsworth (in 1896) produced the *Daily Mail*, which came to stay. George Newnes, whose *Tit Bits* had recently found a dangerous competitor in Harmsworth's *Answers*, brought out another halfpenny paper, the *Daily Courier*, a few days after the birth of the *Daily Mail*. It lasted only a few weeks. Another dire failure was W. T. Stead's effort with a daily illustrated paper in 1903 (or 1904), which lived three weeks.

About 1900 Arthur Pearson, whose *Pearson's Weekly* had been successfully competing, as it does now, with *Tit Bits* and *Answers*, started the *Daily Express*, which, after a disastrous set-back due to an unfortunate detailed and sensational description of the massacre by the Boxers of the personnel of the Foreign Legations in Pekin (which did not happen) has year after year steadily gone ahead. The first daily picture-paper was the *Daily Graphic* (1890) which was for some time illustrated almost entirely by pen-and-ink drawings, employing, before it relied on the Press photographer, some of the most distinguished black-and-white artists of the day ; and more than ten years later came the *Daily Mirror*.

When I first took to newspaper work the amount of brain energy and space given to party politics seemed to anyone, except newspaper proprietors and editors, quite out of proportion to the actual value. A debate in Parliament which to-day would be given no more than a column would in those days have filled four or more columns, and quite ordinary political speeches outside Parliament were treated with lavish generosity. The

political leader-writer was a far more important man than the news-editor of to-day, and each paper, including some of the provincial organs, had its own staff of Parliament reporters and—before the telephone was used for the purpose—messenger boys carrying instalments of the reports from Westminster to Fleet Street. Now most papers obtain their parliamentary reports from one of the news agencies. Law cases—civil as well as criminal—of no sensational value used to be reported at far greater length than now, while all sorts of subjects and occurrences of quite minor, if any, importance were treated seriously. On a Monday morning a sermon by any fairly distinguished preacher on the previous day would be most generously recorded, and at least half a column would be given to the description of a fire which nowadays would be worth ten lines.

One Sunday evening I was dining in the grill-room of the old Ludgate Hill Station at the same table with an obvious newspaper reporter busily transcribing shorthand notes, which he told me were of a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cathedral that afternoon. He remarked that sermons were his special line, and, when I enquired what he did when people were not preaching, and was told that he also specialised in fires, I observed, "Then you will have plenty of copy to-night," apropos of a big fire raging at the moment in Queen Victoria Street, close by. That was the first he had heard of the occurrence, and, with his mouth full of steak, he thrust the sheets of copy in his pocket and tore off to the scene of the conflagration.

By the way, there was a verbatim reporter then on the *Daily Chronicle* staff who specialised in after-dinner speeches, which, if made by anyone of any sort of note, were reported at length; and of course he attended such dinners in evening dress. One day, looking at a local directory to see whether his name appeared, to his horror he found himself described as "waiter." It transpired

that the representative of the directory, after calling several times at the newspaper man's residence to get the necessary form of particular filled in and finding no one at home, had enquired of someone next door as to his neighbour's profession. The man, judging by the dress which the reporter frequently wore when he went out in the evening, had formed his own conclusion.

Different subjects of news had to be departmentalised in the editorial office, as they are now. In this connection here is another little story of many years ago. A certain wealthy and ambitious, but socially obscure couple, having proudly succeeded in including a baronet and his wife and a well-known general officer among their guests at a dinner-party, sent a notification of the event to the *Morning Post* for its Society column. It was returned by the Society editor with a note to the effect that it should have been accompanied by the two-guinea fee charged for inserting such announcements. Then the gentleman, being resourceful as well as economical, remembered that on the occasion of the dinner-party there had been a slight conflagration in the entrance hall through a lighted match being thrown into the umbrella stand. He wrote a somewhat exaggerated account of it, incidentally mentioning the names of the distinguished guests who were in the house at the time, and sent it to the *Morning Post*. As the incident occurred in Grosvenor Square, the sub-editor who dealt with fires included it in the "Fires" column, and with the names of the guests. Thus the gentleman and his wife got the publicity they desired and saved their two guineas.

Apropos of sermon-reporters, I am reminded of a journalist, long since departed, who specialised in Church matters. He was a master of the intricacies of the dogma, liturgy, ritual, and disciplinary laws of the different Churches and denominations ; but he had an unfortunate failing. A serious dispute, with which the High Church Party was concerned, was keeping him busy when one

evening he and I were writing at the same table in an editorial office. He had just interviewed a very important churchman on the subject of the moment. I noticed that he did not seem to be making much progress with his pencil and paper, but was not particularly interested until he suddenly fell off his chair and collapsed on the floor. When I went to his assistance he moaned pathetically, "Oh! Why did I ever come into this wicked world?" Unable to answer his question, I had him put into a cab, and his address was given to the cabman; but, as it transpired next day through a letter of complaint received by his editor, he directed the man to drive to the residence of a very eminent divine to whom he was known only as a journalist, and demanded to be supplied with alcoholic refreshment. That was, I understood, his end as the accredited representative of that paper. The last I heard of him was that he had been knocked down by a bus in Fleet Street and very seriously injured.

In many respects there have been remarkable changes in newspaper methods, also in the means of obtaining news; the latter particularly in the lavish use of telegraph wire and cable, and the telephone has played an important part. When I was at school my father was one of the seriously damaged survivors of a railway accident in France, the most disastrous which had been experienced in that country. If it had happened within the past thirty or forty years the news would have reached London and made sensational contents-bills, within an hour after the occurrence. The first that was known of it in this country was through a letter ("From a Travelling Correspondent") in *The Times* two days after the event! Even twenty years later the post was considered good enough for news which not long afterwards would have been telegraphed as a matter of course; otherwise my first ambitious effort in the way of "special correspondence" would have found its way into the waste-paper basket. At the time of the first elections for the then new County

Councils—and it was an event of far greater importance than it would be now—I was staying with friends in a Welsh mining district, and my host, a mine-owner, was one of the local candidates for his County Council, his opponent being a very popular Nonconformist minister. Feeling ran very high among the miners in favour of their pastor, and serious trouble was anticipated, so that a large force of police had been drafted into the place, some of them guarding my friend's house. The result was a complete surprise. At the last moment the miners had apparently changed their minds ; my host got in by a very substantial majority, and, when the figures were announced, hundreds of men marched in procession to his house and gave him a splendid ovation. It was not until late at night that it occurred to me that a description of the scenes would make good newspaper copy. I caught an early morning train to London, drove to the *Daily Chronicle* office, saw the editor himself—to whom until then I was known only on paper, as an occasional contributor—and when he had read my copy, written in the train, he, without comment, sent it forthwith up to the composing-room. Then he produced a bottle of whisky, saying, “Now we will celebrate our first meeting ; and I hope it will not be our last.” And it was not. My new friend was John Whelan Boyle, a fine type of old-fashioned journalist, who had started his newspaper career as editor-reporter-compositor (all in one) of an insignificant local paper in Ireland. The article, which appeared the following morning—a day later than if it had been telegraphed—occupied over a column ; to-day it would be given about a third of the space.

There are not many left who knew the *Chronicle* when its most attractive features were a whole page devoted to reviews of the best books of the day or to reproductions of pen-and-ink drawings by Joseph Pennell, Whistler, Bernard Partridge, Aubrey Beardsley, Walter Crane,

Headley Fitton, and others. The latter was an extraordinary and very costly achievement for a penny newspaper printed on fast machines, and it would be impossible now. Alas! the *Chronicle* has since then had to adapt itself to more Philistine tastes. To carry on on its old lines would be impossible to-day in any paper sold for a penny. The penny of the 'eighties would, in the price of a newspaper, be equivalent to twopence to-day. Now the penny journal must circulate in hundreds of thousands, and people of literary and artistic tastes are not to be found in such numbers. But it was neither Literature nor Art that first made the *Daily Chronicle* famous. One evening, not long after it had come into existence as offspring of *Clerkenwell News*—that is to say in 1878—the *Princess Alice*, a pleasure steamer, went down in the Thames between Greenwich and London Bridge—to which I have referred in another connection—and hundreds of lives were lost. One of the *Chronicle* reporters, named Heron, happened to be on the river-bank not far from the scene. In those days news was not conveyed as rapidly as it is now, so that the *Chronicle* was the only paper that gave an account of the catastrophe the following morning.

My foregoing reference to the unfortunate *faux pas* of the *Daily Express*, connected with the Boxer trouble in China, recalls another extraordinary case of a daily paper publishing sensational news which it could not justify. About twenty years ago the North Country edition of an important London journal astonished its readers by its announcement of a very unexpected political event. It was the more remarkable because there was no mention of the matter in the parent paper. Next day the provincial edition apologised for its error; but the public never knew how it happened. The general manager of the London paper at that time had reason to suspect that there was a "leakage" in the editorial department—that certain bits of their exclusive news

had been secretly conveyed during the evening to a rival paper. So he set a trap, and took the editor into his confidence. They concocted a piece of "news" which was sure to be utilised by anyone of the staff in league with another paper, and it was set in type. As is customary, every member of the editorial night staff was supposed to see a proof of everything going into the paper. According to plan, that particular item was suppressed at the last moment; but neither of the two conspirators remembered that the proof would in the ordinary course reach, and be used by, the man in charge of the private telephone wire by which most of the contents of the paper was sent every night to the office of the North Country edition.

Another mishap which an editor had reason to regret was so far back as the 'sixties—I think in 1867—when readers of *Punch* were startled, many of them scandalised, by a picture and its accompanying line of letterpress. Two young women in the dress of the period, including crinoline, elastic-side boots and white stockings, were standing at what was evidently intended to be a certain corner of Regent Street with a then rather evil reputation. They were trying in vain to protect themselves from a downpour of rain with the ridiculously small parasols then in fashion; water was dripping off their hats on to their faces, and the deeply flounced crinolines were soaked. According to the line underneath, one of the woebegone and bedraggled "ladies" was asking the other, "How long have you been gay, dear?" Pathetically clever in its way, it was obviously quite out of place. This remarkable occurrence was, I believe, accounted for by the story that a young man left in charge of the paper while the editor was away, finding the "joke" among some drawings not intended for publication, used it as a means of "getting his own back" on the editor, against whom he bore a grudge. But this may not be correct.

Newspaper advertisement has been revolutionised in the past quarter of a century. It seems not long ago that most of the London dailies refused to "display" advertisements, so that there was nothing to catch the eye of the reader. And in advertising themselves the papers have discovered ingenious methods, even in the sky. By the way, I was interested in a little scheme which through an accident proved abortive. It is almost forgotten that for a brief period Madame Tussaud's Exhibition was threatened with a formidable rival in the 'nineties, when Louis Tussaud—a great-nephew, I think, of the old lady—disposed of his interest in the place in the Marylebone Road and opened one of his own in Regent Street. The most conspicuous of his models was a very life-like figure of Queen Victoria holding some document in her hand. I was at that time proprietor-editor of *Woman*, not a feminist organ, and now almost forgotten, but at one time, if I may say so, distinguished for its originality and enterprise, and widely quoted. It occurred to our business manager, Lawrence Turnbull (to-day one of my best friends, and concocting bright advertising ideas in Fleet Street), that Louis Tussaud's Queen Victoria might just as well be holding a copy of *Woman* in her hand, with the title-page conspicuously shown, instead of a dummy document. He came to an arrangement with Tussaud for carrying out the scheme, but the day before our paper was to be fixed in one of Her Majesty's hands the place caught fire and was burnt out, little remaining of Kings, Queens, murderers, and other notabilities more than charred articles of attire and puddles of wax among the debris. (Since then the original Madame Tussaud's has been destroyed by fire.) Later on we obtained good publicity from the "Woman's Exhibition of Women's Handicrafts," which I organised. It was the first exhibition in London on an ambitious scale devoted entirely to women's work.

My contributions to United States newspapers have been few and far between, the last, to a Boston journal, only two years ago; but, like most journalists of this country, I can admire some of the prominent characteristics of the American Press, their enterprise and vivacity, while being disgusted by the unscrupulousness and vulgarity of many of their papers. I recall a remarkable instance of audacity and smartness in the early 'nineties. Two of the then biggest New York journals, the *Sun* and the *World*, were bitter rivals. One of them announced to its readers that it was sending a special correspondent to Europe to do interviews of distinguished personalities whom no newspaper had ever succeeded in interviewing; and in due course it published a "straight talk" between its correspondent and the Pope, followed a week later by another interview in which Bismarck appeared to have been equally communicative. Both articles created a sensation in America, but many of those who read them doubted the genuineness of the productions, particularly the proprietor of the other paper, who immediately dispatched one of his smartest young men to Europe to investigate.

The "special commissioner" started operations at Rome. He managed to get a cutting of the "interview" with the Pope conveyed to his Holiness, with a request that he might be informed whether it was authentic, so that, if it was not, he might expose the fraud in his paper. The Pope, having read the "interview" for the first time, sent for the newspaper man, and, after denying that he had made the remarks attributed to him, or even been interviewed by any journalist, inadvertently replied to a few questions on other subjects. The triumphant American then proceeded to Wilhelmshoe, and by the same stratagem obtained a personal repudiation from Bismarck, who also was somewhat communicative on topics of the moment. The correspondent promptly cabled the two genuine interviews

to his editor in New York, and they were reproduced by other papers in all parts of the States. Thus his newspaper scored largely off its rival, not only by exposing its mendacity, but by giving interviews, neither of which was ever repudiated, of two of the world's most eminent men—one of the greatest "scoops" in the annals of American journalism.

Doubtless the American newspaper proprietor best known in this country was Gordon Bennett, the treble-millionaire owner of the *New York Herald*, who, after the disastrous failure of the London edition of his paper, suffered from chronic Anglophobia. Another, even more remarkable, American newspaper man was Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the *New York World*. I never met him, although at one time within measurable distance of an engagement on his staff, but I heard many stories about him from three different acquaintances, all Englishmen, each of whom was at one time or another his secretary-companion, a very lucrative appointment. He spent most of each year on board his sumptuously appointed yacht in the Mediterranean, generally at anchor, and prided himself on (by means of voluminous daily cables) keeping a constant control over his paper without living in America. When he was afloat his entourage included, in addition to the secretary-companion, a reader—Pulitzer was blind—an amanuensis, a violinist and a pianist—he was a keen musician—a doctor and a chiropodist, and, if I remember correctly, a tutor for his boy and a governess for his girl, when they accompanied him.

He was an ardent woman-hater, probably because he could not see; and, his temper being ungovernable, the secretary-companion for the time being seldom lasted more than a year. On one occasion, having to stay one night in London, and fearing that his rest would be disturbed by street traffic, he instructed his London representative to obtain at any cost the use of

some private house where no traffic could be heard. One of the mansions in Kensington Palace Gardens was rented for a week for the purpose of the one night's occupation. Pullitzer was quite satisfied with the arrangement until, in the early hours of the morning, he was awakened by the piercing shrieks not many yards away of peacocks from Kensington Palace. He rang for his valet, gave him a revolver—Pullitzer generally had one—and told him to go out and shoot the birds. The valet, not daring to disobey his master, did some desultory firing; the neighbourhood was alarmed, police rushed to the spot, and Pullitzer was seriously inconvenienced by the enforced temporary absence of his servant. I have repeated the story as it was told me by his London representative.

It happened that I was in the secret of the unexpected change of proprietorship of two distinguished London newspapers before the public, or even Fleet Street, was informed. In the early 'nineties, when the rumour went forth that the then proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was selling the property, the other papers were racing to obtain the name of the purchaser. I happened to be on very friendly terms with a man who was closely associated with the transaction by which William Waldorf Astor, the New York millionaire, then recently settled in England, had acquired the property. My friend, in taking me into his confidence, swore me to secrecy, and for three days I was proud possessor of a bit of news which I could have sold to one paper in particular for fifty pounds.

Eight years later, when E. T. Cook was editing the *Daily News* and I occasionally contributed to it, he mentioned to me that he thought of asking the proprietors to appoint a news-editor, a post then somewhat recently created in other London newspaper offices. I suggested myself for the job, and he said that he would be glad to have me, but that it would rest with the

proprietors. So, being not unknown to Mr. Henry Oppenheim, one of the two active proprietors, I obtained an interview with him. He seemed favourably disposed, but said that he must discuss it with Arnold Morley, the principal proprietor, which he would do as soon as possible. A few days later I received a letter from Mr. Oppenheim saying that he regretted that, owing to unexpected circumstances, the appointment of a news-editor could not be considered. I had no doubt as to what those circumstances were. There had been a rumour in Fleet Street that the *Daily News* might change hands ; and I had heard that the more advanced wing of the Liberal Party would be glad to get control of it.

As Mr. Oppenheim's communication was not confidential, I wrote a "special" for the *Daily Express* (then in its infancy) to the effect that negotiations for the sale of the paper were practically complete, and that under the new proprietors the policy would undergo a considerable change. That night, when I was in the *Daily Chronicle* office about another matter, the editor, knowing that I was a personal friend of E. T. Cook, asked me to get all the information that I could from him as to the future of the paper. I found that the article in the *Express*, with which Cook had not associated me, had taken him by surprise. He had heard nothing from the proprietors. But the next day he knew more than I did ; and soon afterwards the change of editor, as well as owners, had taken effect. Thus I lost an opportunity of working under a man for whom I had very great respect.

The sudden and undignified collapse of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1923 is one of the tragedies in the history of the English Press. As one who contributed to it intermittently from its earlier days until very shortly before its demise, I am particularly interested in looking back at its chequered career and lamentable end. It was

born in the 'sixties, before newspapers were included in my reading. But I remember how in the 'seventies my father used, metaphorically, to swear by it. The idea of the paper was doubtless inspired by—the title certainly taken from—an imaginary journal described by Thackeray in *Pendennis* as "written by gentlemen for gentlemen."

A generally accepted leading organ of the Liberal Party, it carried considerable weight with political leaders as well as the public. Brilliant writers of their time did some of their best work for it; several of Alice Meynell's most exquisite verses made their first appearance in the "*P.M.G.*" under Cust's editorship. In its best days it was literature as well as politics and journalism. The original editor was Henry Greenwood, a then eminent journalist. In about 1881 he was succeeded by John (afterwards Lord) Morley, under whom the paper fully maintained its dignity and prestige. W. T. Stead was an antithesis to Morley, whom he succeeded. With his propaganda, his American inspirations, and sometimes daring "stunts," he not only woke up the paper, but at one time jeopardised its career. The change from Stead's hectic exuberance to E. T. Cook's more restful temperament and deliberate methods was like the lull after a thunderstorm. If Cook had had more time he would probably have restored the paper to something like its original position; but William Waldorf Astor's acquisition of the property, such as it then was, involved a change in policy, and therefore editor.

Then came Harry Cust, who, with his curious blend of culture, tone, and the brightest Fleet-streetism, put new life into the "*P.M.G.*" But from the proprietor's point of view his ideas were too extravagant, and he gave place to Sir Douglas Straight. Later on F. J. Higginbottom and H. L. Garvin, successively, did their best until Astor disposed of the paper and D. M. Sutherland

was appointed editor. He was "in at the death," but by no means responsible for it. His position was extremely difficult. The paper was never, except perhaps in its earlier days, a real money-making concern. When it was at its best it appealed to a limited class of reader. Astor did not buy it as an investment, and found it too costly a hobby, as at that time there were four other evening papers catering for the same class. Had he held out for about two years longer, he would probably have had a paying property.

My earliest visit to the "*P.M.G.*" office was to an old tumble-down place in Northumberland Street, Strand. I took with me the first article which I offered the paper. Stead, then the editor, was out, but his right-hand man, afterwards Lord Milner, read it while I waited with the result that I was asked to extend my subject to two articles, and was generously remunerated. During his proprietorship Astor built, regardless of cost, a new and luxurious home for the paper in a street off Holborn. A few years later I, with some difficulty, discovered the *Pall Mall Gazette* offices secretly located in the upper part of an undistinguished building. "They have put the poor old '*P.M.G.*' in its coffin at last," I remarked to a companion as I came out. A few weeks later the coffin was nailed up: my old friend was starved to death.

The passing of the *Globe* about five years ago was a minor tragedy. It was the original London evening paper, and as conservative in its methods as in its politics. For news it used to have no rival, and it was as readable as reliable. So long as I knew the paper one of its standing features was an article on some general subject which exactly filled the right-hand column of the front page; hence its being known as the "turn-over." By the way, a friend of mine, Victor Plarr, a one-time journalist, also poet, now holding the important post of librarian to the College of Surgeons,

contributed frequently to that column. To his surprise, one day his latest effort was returned with a courteous hint from the editor that he appeared to have written himself out. To most young journalists this would have been a horrible shock, but Plarr promptly sent in another "turnover," and in an assumed name. The editor, supposing that he had discovered a new and promising contributor, wrote him an appreciation of his work, hoping to receive more of the same kind! And thenceforth none of Plarr's "turnovers" were returned.

It may perhaps be observed that I have had more to say about Liberal than Conservative papers and editors. It is only by accident that most of my newspaper experiences have been connected with the *Pall Mall Gazette* (consistently Liberal before it was bought by Astor), the *Daily Chronicle*, and *Daily News*, the last only to the extent of very occasional contributions, the first of which I wrote when at Rugby. I have never written on political subjects; in fact, mere party politics do not appeal to my tastes or temperament. When in the 'nineties some of the Liberal papers were seducing many readers of the other party by attractive features of a non-political character, I wrote an article for the *National Review*, entitled, "What is the Tory Press doing for the Tory Party?" Three "superior" and somnolent editors of Conservative papers with very limited circulations woke up and seized their pens to "go for" me, which they affected to do more in sorrow than in anger, implying that I was a mere misguided fool, and giving me no credit for, quite disinterestedly, doing a service to their party. Soon afterwards Cust realised in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, as other Conservative editors have done, that it is possible to run a Conservative paper enterprisingly without going to sleep over it.

Some of my most joyous newspaper experiences were in Ireland, when I was doing special correspondence

during one of that country's periods of serious unrest. The happenings which I had to describe were mostly in and about the wild, mountainous region of Donegal. Infantry, cavalry, and a large force of Royal Irish Constabulary were engaged there in suppressing disorders, and at one time scouring the mountains for men suspected of having been concerned in the murder of an R.I.C. district inspector, named Martin. Lodging accommodation was scarce, so I often shared with military or constabulary officers, or both, and we had some merry evenings, to which constabulary district inspectors contributed largely with their delightful Irish humour. I found my billeting with military and police officers not only congenial, but at one time particularly convenient. In some of my articles in the *Daily Chronicle* I had indulged in plain speaking about the evil influence of the priests on the people, and they had been reproduced in Nationalist papers with far from complimentary remarks about the writer. So, thanks to a priest, I was a marked man. On one occasion I had to dodge a shower of stones and other objectionable missiles. Although the conditions were serious, and there was a very bitter feeling against the Forces of the Crown, some incident would occasionally appeal to the sense of humour of both sides and elicit spontaneously witty badinage from the Irishmen. The other side occasionally had an opportunity of their own. At Falcarragh, a remote village near the Donegal Coast, a party of priests and Irish M.P.'s had forgathered to encourage the peasantry in their resistance to evictions which were being carried out in the neighbourhood.

One particular M.P., who used to specialise in questions in the House of Commons as to the conduct of the R.I.C., towards whom he had a rooted antipathy, was making trouble, and, to keep him out of mischief, he was constantly under observation. "Shadowing" was hardly the correct term, seeing that the policeman

performing the duty was a man of gigantic build and, moreover, made no secret of his purpose. In fact, when the two were well out of sight of other M.P.'s and police, they would treat one another to bottles of porter. One evening they had such an excessively good time together that next morning they were found sleeping it off, locked in one another's arms on the floor of a disused barn. Thenceforth the M.P. dared not ask any more questions in the House which might reflect on the R.I.C.

Some of the Irish Press often unconsciously provided me with plenty of humour. There were then two newspapers in Londonderry, the *Sentinel* and the *Journal*, the one fiercely Nationalist and the other just the opposite. They were bitter enemies, and attacked one another in print relentlessly; but, nevertheless, one, having run short of type, would send over to the other, on the opposite side of the street, to borrow the necessary material for carrying on the duel. Fortunately in those days special correspondence was often more in the form of letter than telegram. In such wild parts it would have been almost impossible to get a thousand-words Press telegram dispatched from a village post office in less than a whole working day, and the mail was apt to be equally unreliable. Most of my Press letters were conveyed by a constabulary dispatch-bearer to the nearest post town, sometimes forty miles away. Those seemed exciting times then, with police-protected landlords, rick-burning, cattle-maiming, and occasional murders; but now, compared with the awful atrocities thirty years later, they appear quite insignificant.

Nearly all my "inside" newspaper work (on the night staff) was during the South African War. I often managed to do outside work as well, which was pecuniarily advantageous, but generally involved curtailing my night's, or rather morning's, rest. In those days London newspapers went to Press nearly two hours later than they do now, and the night staff generally

did not get home before 3 a.m. When on all-night duty to deal with news cables which often came in from South Africa in the early morning, I did not get to the office until midnight, and on my return home dined when ordinary folk were breakfasting.

When Queen Victoria's last illness was known to have reached a crisis, the first intimation in the Press that Her Majesty's death was considered imminent was in a brief but large-typed and delicately phrased paragraph in a conspicuous position of *Lloyd's News*, now the *Sunday News*. The previous (Saturday) evening the proprietor of a small hotel in which I was seeking refreshment informed me that one of the Buckingham Palace coachmen had just been there and had told him that orders had been received at the Royal Stables for horses and carriages to be taken down to Osborne immediately. That was enough to justify the conclusion that all hope had been abandoned. The *Chronicle*, for which I was then working, would of course not be published before Monday, so I took the news to *Lloyd's*, which belonged to the same proprietors. The Queen passed away two or three days later.

One morning, two days before King Edward's Coronation was to have taken place, I turned up at the *Chronicle* office at 10 a.m. to receive instructions as to the particular work I was to do in connection with the great occasion. I had just arrived there when the tape-machine—usually unemployed at that hour—started ticking out some news, that of the King's serious illness. I immediately went off on a round of central London with instructions to do a description of "How the News was Received." I got to the City just as an official was posting up a notice outside the Mansion House conveying the announcement in which His Majesty's illness was described as perityphlitis. It was the first that I had heard of such a malady. A couple of days later it had

been changed to appendicitis, a term also then unknown to ordinary people.

At one time I wrote a weekly "London Letter" for the Calcutta *Daily News*, one of the first English newspapers published in India. It was then suffering from the very amateurish control, including that of the editorial department, of a little syndicate of Calcutta men (among them the late Sir George Forest, the eminent historian), none of whom seemed to know anything about newspaper work. When I realised that they expected me to get advertisements as well as write for their paper my letters were discontinued. While some years later in Calcutta, I found that the paper had been sold to a syndicate of Indian gentlemen and was representing native interests. Later on, when I was travelling in the East and Far East, several editors of English papers out there kindly invited my contributions, so I have done some bits of fugitive journalism in Singapore, Lahore, Yokohama, Hongkong, and other places. As regards the last-named, one of two contributions was a description, obtained from an eye witness in Canton, of an attack by pirates on a passenger vessel in the Canton River, which was cabled from Hongkong to London papers. No one who has not had inside experience of editing a newspaper "set up" in English by native compositors—Indian, Chinese, or Japanese—can imagine the difficulties; but on the whole the result is far better than might be expected. In Hongkong I found that the compositor-in-chief of one paper, a Chinaman, knew no English, yet managed to decipher and put in type, letter by letter, English handwriting, whether good or bad—a miraculous achievement for anyone but a Chinaman.

I have had more than one experience of the misinterpretation of one of my pseudonyms. When the *Ladies' Field* was in its infancy I supplied it with nourishment in the form of a weekly article treating subjects of interest to women from a man's point of view, and not always quite

seriously. Being rather shy in those days—if not now—I decided to adopt a pseudonym, and, while thinking one out, I happened to read a reference to Ariadne, which resulted in my writing over the signature, “Henry Adney.” Later on I received a letter from a lady, named Adney, rejoicing that she had succeeded in tracing Henry, a near relative who had for some years cut himself off from his family.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME PRESSMEN

AMONG the marked changes in the Press in my time there has been the levelling up of the intellectual standard of Fleet Street's personnel. Men of scholarly distinction at Oxford and Cambridge seem to have adapted themselves to the enterprise and requirements of modern journalism to an extent to which one might have supposed it impossible. But it is nearly half a century since John Morley, some time after coming down from Oxford, edited the old *Pall Mall Gazette*, and it must be close on forty years since W. L. Courtney, Scholar of University College, Oxford, and a First Class in "Greats," abandoned schoolmastering for the editorial staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. He is not only its literary editor, but has sometimes written its dramatic *critiques* and has occasionally occupied an even more responsible position. Yet he has managed to find time to edit the *Fortnightly Review* and give it the distinction which it enjoys, and to write several books (including one of most interesting reminiscences) and two or three plays. I have had the privilege of being personally acquainted with him, but not as a journalist.

Now Oxford and Cambridge are keeping editors regularly supplied with new blood, many representatives of which are content to start in the subordinate position of junior sub-editors or reporters ; and on my occasional visits to Fleet Street I meet mere youths who have lately left one of the principal universities, carrying on with their jobs with no air of educational superiority,

but with a quiet enthusiasm and an obvious pride in being connected with their several papers. At the same time I am delighted to find that the old school of journalist is not yet obsolete, the men who, with no superior and expensive educations, can hold their own, thanks to their fund of general information, quick brain, often an hereditary journalistic instinct, and sometimes that thorough training in the rudiments such as can be acquired nowhere else as on the staff of a good provincial paper.

I think I am correct in saying that Henry (known as "Harry") Cust was the one and only member of the aristocracy, or real Society man, who has ever yet occupied the editorial chair of a newspaper of any distinction, and in his day the *Pall Mall Gazette* was very distinguished. Had he lived long enough he would have succeeded to the Brownlow earldom. He was best known in Society as one of that peculiar, arrogantly superior and unconsciously amusing coterie—"cult" they would call it, I suppose—known as "The Souls," which at one time claimed Arthur Balfour as a member. Cust walked quietly into Fleet Street—to be accurate, into Charing Cross Road—and was soon as much at home as a practical journalist as he was as a "Soul," in spite of the contrast. Then, as in the days of Morley's editorship, some of the most brilliant writers of the day gathered round the *P.M.G.*; I cannot claim to be one of them, but I had the delightful experience of "free-lancing" under that inspiring chief.

Cust's right-hand man for a time was Ivan Muller, one of the most distinguished leader-writers of his time; but, as assistant editor, he sometimes found it difficult to conform to the details of office routine. For instance, Cust commissioned me to write a couple of articles on a rather sensational subject affecting the medical profession. He was away for a few days' holiday when I delivered my copy punctually to Ivan Muller, who was

expecting it. A few hours later I was astounded to get the articles returned by post with the printed form expressing the editor's regret. Of course there was no question as to payment, but I did not want to waste what I thought good copy, so I took it straightway to another editor, who not only published the articles, but commissioned me to do some interviews of leading medical men on the subject; which brought more grist to the mill. When Cust saw the articles in another paper he was furious with me until he had my explanation. Muller had, doubtless absent-mindedly, put my copy into the "To be Returned" basket instead of into the one marked "Printer."

I first knew Sir Douglas Straight, Cust's immediate successor on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, when he was a barrister practising mostly at the Old Bailey—of course before he was appointed to an Indian Judgeship. Again Astor took Fleet Street by surprise in appointing a man of no practical experience of journalism to edit such an important paper. But he knew what he wanted and was probably satisfied with the result. Straight was less adventurous and extravagant than his predecessor, while lacking his enthusiasm and gaiety; a thorough man of the world, a well-known figure about Town, and a most courteous gentleman. I was grateful to him for many opportunities of exercising my "free-lance" proclivities, and for the encouragement he gave.

Going much further back, long before I had ventured on journalism, the first editor of eminence whom I knew was Arthur (afterwards Sir Arthur) Arnold, described by Escott in his work on the English Press as "a master of English journalism." That was in the palmy days of the *Echo*, which he edited with such marked distinction. When my first swallow-tailed coat was in its pristine glory I was invited to some of those delightful "at homes" given by Mrs. Arnold at their house in Kensington Palace Gardens. On those occasions one met many

of the shining lights of Art, Literature, Stage and Press of this and other countries. Arnold's brother, Sir Edwin Arnold, author of *The Light of Asia*, and for some years editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, was generally one of the guests.

No editor of my time was more respected by his brother Pressmen of every party, or more beloved by those who worked under him than E. T. Cook. After a distinguished career at Oxford (New College) he started writing for the Press, with no serious thought of adopting it as a profession. However, John Morley, then editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, annexed him, and years later when Stead, Morley's successor, left the paper, Cook succeeded him, and filled "the Chair" until the change of proprietor and policy. Then the Liberal leaders started the *Westminster Gazette* as a substitute for the *Pall Mall*, and Cook was appointed editor. From there he went to the *Daily News*, which he edited, and kept worthy of its old traditions as a Liberal-Imperialist organ until the unexpected sale of the property. As a political writer he was fearless, fair, and strictly honourable. As an editor he sometimes seemed to those who did not understand him to lack enterprise and enthusiasm, but he had a sharp eye and brain for good copy, and was always wide awake in spite of what was erroneously regarded as phlegmatism. Tremendously industrious, he, without neglecting his newspaper, found time for literary work outside Fleet Street, such as his edition of Ruskin, a biography of Delane (the eminent editor of *The Times*) and one of Florence Nightingale.

Another outstanding scholar among journalists was, and is, St. Loe Strachey, who has recently relinquished control of the *Spectator*, which, as proprietor-editor, he has raised to a position and reputation equal to, if not higher than, those of any weekly periodical of the day. He is of the present more than the past, but it was over thirty years ago that I was associated with him in

newspaper work, and was profoundly impressed by his vast fund of knowledge and facile pen, and of my comparative inferiority. Now his light is shining more brilliantly than ever; one of the most dominant and highly respected men in the newspaper world, he is recognised as an authority on nearly a dozen subjects, each one of which he has studied deeply. In military matters he seems to be as well versed as many a regular officer. It is almost forgotten that some years before the War he patriotically raised his "Experimental Company" of infantry, and had them trained under a specially selected officer, to prove that a complete soldier could be made out of a man of average intelligence in six months. Not many years afterwards his theory was put to a more searching test, in Kitchener's Army, and proved absolutely sound. And the same man has written leading articles for the *Bullionist*, which have been studied respectfully by leading merchants and financiers. A Victorian at heart, he has a strong leaning towards modern institutions and rational Socialism; and he is an enthusiastic Imperialist. In the old days I knew him in his country home, then only a workman's cottage, at Newlands Corner, near Guildford. If he has ever needed inspiration, he must have found it in that bracing air, with a gorgeous view of the Surrey Hills. And I remember him and his wife in their little flat in Victoria Street when their beloved son, Evelyn, to whose memory his father dedicated his exquisitely pathetic work, *The River of Life*, was a few months old.

I had the privilege of being personally acquainted with that grand old man of journalism, Edward Lloyd, proprietor and founder of what was then *Lloyd's Weekly News* (now as enterprising as ever as the *Sunday News*) and the *Daily Chronicle*. Although I had previously written for several "dailies" on special subjects, it was from him and the editor of the *Chronicle* that I first received any personal encouragement. He impressed me

as a man of remarkable perception of the requirements of the newspaper reader, and of absolute integrity, but with no assumption of either. When I returned from my first tour in Ireland, as special correspondent for the *Chronicle*, he not only personally thanked me for my work, but gave instructions by which the amount of the cheque which I received in settlement exceeded my expectations. By this practical form of appreciation of the work of members of his staffs he won their enthusiasm, but it required no monetary incentive to gain their affection. Although already a man of considerable wealth when I first knew him, and risen from a humble position in life, he had nothing of the "new rich" about him. His London home was in a fine old house in Westminster, the size of which was necessitated by that of his family, not by any personal ambition; his habits and tastes were conspicuous by their simplicity. I remember him telling me that he had never departed from the practice of his earlier days of dining in the middle of the day. When he was invited by the Liberal Union Club, then an important political organisation, as guest of honour at one of their banquets in recognition of the services which the *Chronicle* had rendered to the party, he found a reasonable excuse for not accepting the invitation; but he did not mention, as he did to me, that the line which his newspaper had taken with his approval was not with a view to serving any political party. Some years after his death his eldest son, Frank (who has since then sold both *Chronicle* and *Lloyd's News*), refused a peerage offered him by a Liberal Prime Minister. Although, during his managing-proprietorship of the *Chronicle*, it was a consistent advocate of Liberalism, he, like his father, preferred to be independent. And Frank Lloyd has been a reflection of his parent not only in the spirit of independence, but in his lavish generosity. It would be interesting to calculate in hundreds of acres the aggregate area of land which he

has presented to the public as new "lungs," in some cases anonymously.

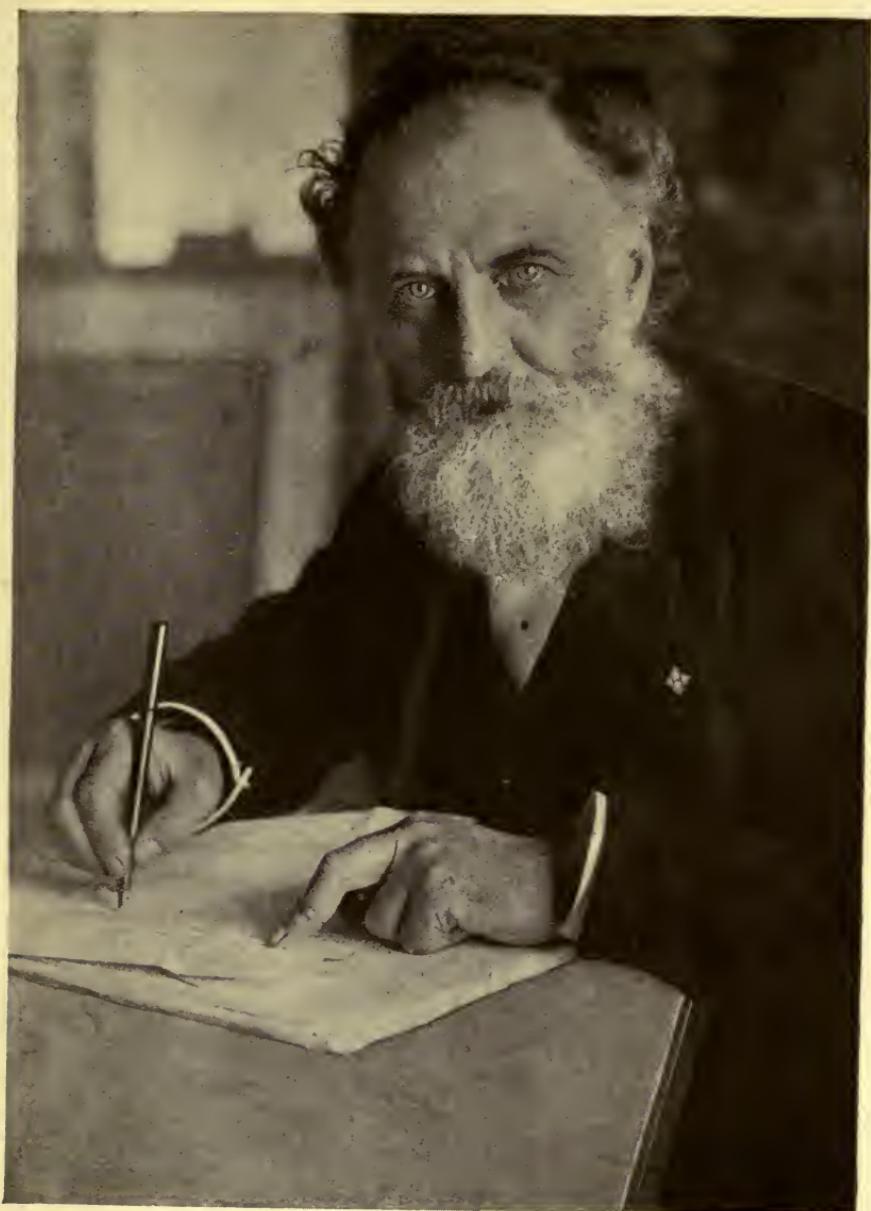
A striking contrast to Edward Lloyd was Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, proprietor and editor-in-chief of the *Morning Post*, and a remarkable reflection of the character, "tone" and price of his paper, which in those days cost threepence—or was it fourpence? It was then, as now, the acknowledged authority on, and faithful recorder of, the doings and affairs of the aristocracy and plutocracy, also the medium by which valets, ladies'-maids and the rest of the cream of domestic service obtained situations. The *Morning Post* was then rather conspicuously devoid of any journalistic enterprise. An intimate friend of Borthwick (before he rose to the peerage) once asked him in my presence when he was going to wake up his paper, and its proprietor replied complacently, "Why disturb a property that brings in about forty thousand a year?"

But he had been clever enough to see great possibilities for the *Post* in the founding of the Primrose League, in connection with which he played a prominent part; and, with a prospective new and large clientele, he had already brought down the price of the paper to the plebeian penny. In his Primrose League activities he was ably supported by his editor, Sir William Hardman, whom I remember also as father of two charming daughters, who danced divinely before drawing-room dancing degenerated into promiscuous hugging. As a journalist, I met Algernon Borthwick in connection with some work which I did for his paper in Ireland.

In old days I occasionally, too rarely, met Thomas Marlowe, the, I believe, original editor of the *Daily Mail*, and at this moment still occupying that exalted and responsible position. It is a wonderful record for any man to have retained the editorship of such a strenuously conducted daily newspaper for thirty years, and

for most of that time under so hustling a proprietor as Alfred Harmsworth, later on Lord Northcliffe.

W. T. Stead, who so tragically went down with the *Titanic*, was, as a journalist, absolutely unique. My personal acquaintance with him in newspaper work was limited to one occasion, when I was writing some rather important articles for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then under his Editorship ; but I knew him otherwise. He seemed to me a true and practical Christian ; a combination of the astute journalist with an enthusiastic and, for a time, fanatical social reformer. Although an idealist, and sometimes a crank, he always had an eye to the interests of his paper ; and each of his fresh "causes" seemed to lend itself to newspaper enterprise. His notorious "Modern Babylon" articles, although they astounded and shocked the public, induced an enormous, quite temporary, demand for the *Pall Mall* ; but for years after Stead had resigned the editorship the *P.M.G.* was ostracised by people who associated it only with that notorious adventure, which incidentally involved him in criminal proceedings and a three months' imprisonment. Many of those who knew him well, while deplored his excesses, appreciated the earnestness with which he carried out the propaganda to which doubtless the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was attributable. He could certainly claim to be the pioneer (for better or worse) in this country of American journalism, with its "stunts" and "interviews," the latter almost unknown here until he made a feature of them in the 'eighties. To the general public he was most favourably known as founder and editor of the *Review of Reviews*, which had an enormous circulation until Stead abandoned most of the original scheme to find space for ventilating his views on subjects which did not appeal to the general reader. He started the *Review* in partnership with George Newnes, who provided the capital. But when he took up the Salvation Army and gave it a very prominent



W. T. STEAD.

*Photo by E. H. Mills]*

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place in his pages—before it was firmly established—Newnes protested so determinedly that Stead, with his characteristic perseverance and resourcefulness, bought him out with several thousand pounds, said at the time to have been found for the purpose by General Booth.

Another eminent editor who combined idealism and sincerity with enterprising journalism was H. W. Massingham. I first met him in Ireland when, as editor of the *Star*, he paid a personal visit to the country to obtain first-hand information on the relations between landlord and tenant. In my previous volume I gave my experiences and expressed my high appreciation of him as editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, which he left, sacrificing a considerable income, on a matter of principle, otherwise a difference of policy between him and the proprietor. Subsequently, as editor of the *Nation*, until he died about a year ago, he attracted among his readers many who, although differing with him in politics, admired the obvious sincerity of his convictions, the thoroughness with which he had studied a variety of subjects and the directness, and sometimes charm, of his writing. Massingham was a man well worth knowing, and not only in print.

So far as the public was concerned, George Augustus Sala was the best-known journalist of my time. As a descriptive writer, he contributed largely to the popularity of the *Daily Telegraph* in the 'seventies and 'eighties. His style was easy and picturesque, inclined to be florid, and his fund of general information of subjects of no deep importance was inexhaustible. Perhaps his best achievement was in that brilliant series of articles on his visit to Australia, entitled "The Land of the Golden Fleece." He was a real Bohemian, a *bon viveur*. And he was one of the privileged journalists of his time who dared to introduce "puffs" of his friends, or of firms and their goods, into his articles. One of the stories told about him in this connection was that, in writing a description of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, he alluded to meeting

a friend, the sheen of whose "Lincoln and Bennett" reflected the spring-day sun—or something of that kind. But, as was related, the man who sub-edited the article also had a hatter, and, in the hope of reward, substituted his name for that of Sala's.

I knew the proprietor of each of three very popular weeklies ; George Newnes, who made a fortune out of *Tit-Bits* (and the *Strand Magazine*), and Alfred Harmsworth, whose acquaintance I made when he was just starting *Answers* (perhaps dreaming of a prospective *Daily Mail*) ; and the first time I met Arthur Pearson was when he was a tiny boy on a visit to his grandfather's house in Essex. I renewed the acquaintance with Pearson when, twenty years later, he offered me a partnership in *Pearson's Weekly*, and I was, alas ! too timid to embark on what seemed then a very doubtful speculation. I met him frequently for several years afterwards, and was privileged to see something of the carrying out of one of his most original Prize Competitions, described as "A Wife and a Hundred a Year." The editor (the first Mrs. Arthur Pearson actually worked it) was to select from among his readers the girl who, it appeared, would prove the most perfect wife, and she was to choose a husband from among six male readers selected by the editor on account of their qualifications for matrimony. The couple, thus united, were to receive a hundred pounds a year from *Pearson's Weekly*. There were many hundreds of candidates of both sexes, and in due course the girl was chosen, and she and her mother interviewed in their Ealing home the six successful swains (one a curate), but, as none of them satisfied the young lady, the competition was abortive.

Before the woman journalist had established herself in Fleet Street, and when women who wrote for periodicals confined themselves mainly to feminine subjects (and were vulgarly known as "clotheswomen") Mary Billington was an important member of the *Daily Graphic*

staff, and one of the best descriptive writers and special correspondents, not only of those days, but throughout her newspaper career, which continued until her death two years ago. She was an indefatigable worker, remarkably well-informed, and always ready to tackle any new subject of the moment, however difficult. I was particularly interested in her success, because I had a slight acquaintance with her father, a country parson of the old school. Then there was that very beautiful woman, Lady Colin Campbell, with her great brain and fascinating style of writing, who, until her health broke down, was a regular contributor to some of the best weekly papers on Art and other special subjects.

Elizabeth Robins Pennell, wife and—it may seem inconsistent—devoted companion of Joseph Pennell, the eminent American illustrator, used to do me the honour of contributing a column on Art to a paper under my control. Every week for two years I looked forward impatiently to reading her manuscript on its arrival. And she could write equally well on other subjects. I enjoyed several afternoon visits to their old-world flat in the Adelphi, at a window of which her husband made some of his famous sketches of scenes on the London reaches of the Thames. I am one of very many who regret that the Pennells (he died recently) returned to, and settled down in, their native country.

The name of Emily Crawford is probably unknown to four-fifths of the Fleet Street of to-day. At one time she was the most eminent woman journalist in Europe. While for some years Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, she wrote a daily letter from the French capital, which, generally filling a column or more, was very widely read, and was frequently quoted by the foreign Press. She had a remarkable grasp of the political situation in France from time to time, in fact, day to day, and her views thereon were generally treated with

respect, if not approval, by the Quai d'Orsay. Politics apart, she was in a position to write from inside information and observation about the doings and fashions of Parisian Society ; her criticisms of French Literature, Art and Drama were those of a woman who understood her subject, and she knew Paris as well as almost any Parisian ; and so far back as 1871, when she experienced the horrors of the Commune. I have often regretted that my acquaintance with Mrs. Crawford was limited to a couple of chance meetings at mutual friends' houses when she was on one of her flying visits to London.

At one time I was well acquainted with nearly all the London dramatic critics, but I cannot go so far back as George Henry Lewes or John Oxenford, of *The Times*, or Edward Blanchard, of the *Daily Telegraph*, three of the most distinguished. Nesbit was the first *Times* critic in my day, followed by H. B. Walkley, whom I first knew when he was representing the *Star*, and striking a then rather original note as a critic. William Archer, whose theatrical work was a great feature of *The World*, was the first of the intellectual school of critics ("high-brow" was then unknown) of my time. He will be remembered for many years to come as the man who created an appreciation of Ibsen in this country. A striking contrast to Archer in personality, character, and brains was Clement Scott, one of the shining lights of the *Daily Telegraph*. He was acknowledged, at any rate he posed, as the doyen of the London critics. His opinions no doubt carried weight, although he had strong likes and dislikes, and indulged them freely. Most theatre managers, authors and actors lived in awe of him, far more anxious as to what he would say about their plays and acting than as to the playgoer's verdict. His style was fluent and ornate, inclined to gush and exaggeration.

My old friend, Ernest Bendall, who passed away last year, was one of the most distinguished and highly

respected critics. For some years his articles on new productions were a favourite feature of the *Observer*. His sound judgment and impartiality were duly recognised when the Lord Chamberlain appointed him one of his two Examiners of Plays in partnership with Charles Brookfield. This combination seemed ideal ; both were men of the world, as well as of the theatre, and each must have found a congenial companion in the other in their workroom at the Lord Chamberlain's office. "Joe" Knight, editor of *Notes and Queries*, who "did the theatres" for the *Athenæum* and the *Globe*, and later on the *Daily Graphic*, was a cultured student of, and authority on, Literature and the Drama, and a most generous critic of acting, always anxious to avoid hurting the feelings of players whose performances were inadequate.

No one not specially informed could suspect Spencer Wilkinson, the world-famed professor of military history, and accepted authority on military and naval matters, of having been a dramatic critic, and a good one, too. Meeting him at a first night at the Haymarket, exactly thirty years ago, I was surprised to find that he was there professionally for the *Morning Post*. He soon showed that he could criticise a play as easily and effectively as a Government's Naval Programme ; in fact, there are few subjects on which he cannot write. It was said at the time that he had got his first chance as a play-critic through a bright idea of the *Morning Post* editor to have the notice of a nautical melodrama done by a naval expert. The piece was called *True Blue* ; I saw it, and have a distinct recollection of the heroine being incarcerated in a ship's boiler. By the way, Leon M. Lion, now a well-known actor-manager, made his debut in that piece.

One of the most sound critics of that time was John Northcott, whose son, Richard, is now a recognised authority on the history of Music, more particularly that

of Covent Garden Opera. With no attempt at style or superior understanding, but scrupulously conscientious, John Northcott was always convincing. By the way, in instructing another and inexperienced journalist who was to deputise for him in an emergency, he impressed on him that he should treat any shortcomings of author or actor as delicately as possible. The play which the novice had to criticise was a dire failure, and on the fall of the curtain the gallery found vent for its feelings in a storm of hissing. Northcott's deputy finished his notice with : "When the curtain fell, certain sibilant sounds were wafted across the inconstant air." But, thanks to a sub-editor's blue pencil (mine, as it happened), this elegant passage did not reach the compositor.

I have not forgotten Jope Slade, whose dramatic criticisms in that once brilliant little evening paper, the *Echo*, were distinctive. His charming widow, also a journalist, married the son of Moy Thomas, for many years the *Daily News* critic. Then, too, there was Reginald Gead, of the *Morning Leader*, another paper which did not deserve to die. I met him a few months ago, still full of "go," but, I understood, otherwise engaged than in dramatic criticism. So much for those of only the more or less remote past. Except Wilkinson, Walkley and Gead, all those whom I have mentioned have "gone over."

E. F. Spence (now K.C.), who ably represented the *Westminster Gazette* on first nights, when it was an evening paper, has abandoned the Press for the Bar, and apparently finds it more lucrative. My old friend, J. T. Grein, who in his early days as a critic was regarded by the unintellectual as a crank, because he took the Drama seriously, has continued persistently and successfully to aim at educating the British playgoer, particularly in connection with the "Independent Theatre" and by encouraging an international *entente* on the stage. He is still working as hard as ever and seems likely to be for

some years to come. Littlewood, formerly of the *Daily Chronicle* and more recently of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, H. M. Walbrook, on the staff of the same paper in its palmy days, and Morrison, of the *Morning Post*, all of whom I may, I think, claim as old friends, continue to afford me interesting reading on theatrical and other subjects. It would appear from his present mental and physical activity that Morrison must have been little more than an infant when I first knew him, but I will not give any clue to his age; and this applies also to Malcolm Watson, of the *Daily Telegraph*, whose regular weekly column of Theatrical Notes has for many years been, not only entertainingly informing, but free from the slightest suspicion of "log-rolling." I am personally unacquainted with any of the younger school of dramatic critics, but, nevertheless, thoroughly enjoy the work of several of them, recognising that in some respects they are superior to most of their forerunners in the soundness of their judgment and in their style of expressing it, and, which seems more important, entirely unprejudiced. In naming only one of these, Edith Shackleton, I am paying no compliment to her sex, but to (in my humble opinion) one of the most brilliant writers of the day, and not only in her dramatic criticisms.

Although his opportunities were few and far between, the "war correspondent" was for many years a permanent and important man on the staff of nearly every London newspaper. Of course Dr. W. H. Russell created the institution, as *Times* correspondent in the Crimea. His letters—before the days of Press telegrams—were not only vivid descriptions of scenes witnessed, but fearless criticisms of the operations, and exposures of "muddles"; they created a sensation at the time, and have since been republished, and made the most reliable history of that war. No other war correspondent has ever shown such a masterful understanding of the science of warfare or been more hated by incompetent generals and War Office

chiefs, or more respected by the highest military authorities of his, and the present, time. Archibald Forbes, an old cavalryman, came next to Russell, as a great war correspondent. He did splendid work for the *Daily News* in the Franco-Prussian Campaign and subsequently in the Russo-Turkish War ; and in the Zulu War his famous ride of a hundred miles in twenty hours with dispatches was a fine achievement.

Another conspicuous war correspondent of my time, but of a different type to Russell and Forbes, was Bennett Burleigh, who served the *Daily Telegraph* in some half-dozen campaigns. He was sometimes inclined to exaggerate his own importance and to assume a dictatorial attitude towards military authorities ; but unquestionably a most enterprising correspondent, and always courageous. In the South African War, in which some of the newspapers were represented by two, three, or even more correspondents each, he discovered to his surprise that all of them were treated alike, and he made no secret of his annoyance. But, sound and resourceful journalist as he was, he succeeded in getting the news, of the final surrender of the Boers, to his paper in advance of the rest. Before any correspondents were permitted to telegraph the momentous information to their papers Burleigh sent a private wire to his wife : "Coming Home." She knew what it was intended to convey, and took it to the *Daily Telegraph*, which thus forestalled its competitors.

"Charlie" Williams, whose excellent work in two Egyptian Campaigns brought the *Daily Chronicle* into prominence when it was in its infancy, was another of the old school obsessed by the importance of war correspondents. When the South African War started he was too old to go out, so was employed as "military expert" on the editorial staff of the *Chronicle* ; and he was intensely jealous of any interference with his job. Soon after war was declared I was lunching at one of

the Service clubs and incidentally obtained very important news which I immediately conveyed to my editor. When Williams arrived at the *Chronicle* office from the War Office, where he had been told that there was "nothing new," and was shown my copy, he insisted that it was "all damned rot," and protested against its being used; but the editor overruled him, and it turned out to be correct in every detail. After several other differences of opinion, he suddenly severed his connection with the paper, and with journalism, before the end of the South African War.

Frank Scudamore (whom, I regret, I have not met for years) has done distinguished work for *The Times* in several wars, and when there has been no fighting job for him, has travelled widely for that paper and served it admirably. Like most *Times* men, he affects no literary style, aiming at telling his story in plain and convincing language, and he fights shy of limelight. Another of my old friends, Pearce, who followed Archibald Forbes on the *Daily News*, although an old campaigner from the Carlist affair onwards, was no fire-eater, but an unassuming, effective journalist who managed to "get home." Apart from war, he wrote many charming articles on sporting matters for the *Field*, particularly his vivid descriptions of runs with famous packs, including the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.

The South African War brought out several new war correspondents, particularly Knight (*Morning Post*), who lost an arm, Steevens (*Daily Mail*), who died of fever in Ladysmith, Donohoe and Nevinson (father of the painter), both *Daily Chronicle* men. Nevinson missed much of the fighting in the open through being "locked up" in Ladysmith, but got some very effective dispatches out of the beleaguered garrison. In the Great War he acted as correspondent for a group of papers in the Dardanelles, and was wounded. Another of the *Chronicle* correspondents, a South African, named Parslow, was

shot dead in Mafeking during the siege by an intoxicated officer of the Colonial troops. "Charlie" Hands, one of Alfred Harmsworth's (and Lord Northcliffe's) most faithful henchmen, saw real fighting for the first time in South Africa, and was severely wounded. Winston Churchill—I forget which paper he represented—was taken prisoner before he could add to his other distinctions that of war correspondent. By the way, it is almost forgotten that, some years previously, his father, creator of the famous "Fourth Party," went out to Africa not only for his health, but as special correspondent for the *Daily Graphic*. Few of his contributions were of any value.

Three years previously Hands had written his amusing descriptions of the serio-comic American-Spanish "War." His writing, whatever the subject, was marked by a quaint sense of humour of his own. It was somewhere in the 'nineties that I read in the *Star* a delightfully funny but quite inoffensive account of the celebration of the Jewish Passover in Whitechapel. The writer finished with a description of the Passover cake, concluding: "which the *Star* man would rather die than eat." I decided that I must know that man. I managed to meet him and have never regretted it. Cust discovered him for the *Pall Mall Gazette* shortly afterwards. Then Harmsworth appropriated him for the *Mail*. He is now on the retired list, and still full of fun, enjoying the well-deserved legacy which Northcliffe left him. Steevens had already made a great reputation by his descriptive dispatches to the *Daily Mail* in the second Egyptian Campaign; his book, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, is of course almost a classic. By his death the British Press lost one of its most brilliant men and a delightful personality. I happen to have reason to recall his tragic end in January, 1900. At that time I was in all-night charge of the *Daily Chronicle*, dealing with war telegrams which came in after the principal edition

of the paper had gone to Press. One night a cable from Nevinson (in Ladysmith) gave the news and circumstances of poor Steevens' death. I immediately sent the message to the *Daily Mail* office, which was the first intimation they received.

I have followed Martin Donohoe's newspaper career with personal interest. I first knew him when he was at Aldershot with the New South Wales Lancers, which had come over here for training shortly before the outbreak of the South African War. His regiment was then supposed to be sailing immediately on their return to Australia, so Donohoe, who had good Press experience in Australia, offered his services as war correspondent to the *Daily Chronicle*, and soon afterwards was in the thick of the fighting. I had the pleasing job of "handling" most of his cables, all admirably descriptive, particularly his account of Magersfontein. Later on he did some fine work as war correspondent in the Balkan campaign. One of his best achievements was in connection with the Portuguese Revolution. At that time he was, and probably is now, the *Chronicle's* Paris correspondent. One night he happened to cultivate the acquaintance of a stranger in a Paris café with a premonition that it might be productive. The man, under the influence of absinthe, was more communicative than he intended. Three days later Donohoe was in Portugal just in time for the outbreak of the Revolution ; and before other English papers had done more than hint at its possibility his came out with two columns describing the thrilling scenes of the rising by which the Portuguese monarchy came to an end. In the Great War he served in the Army as Intelligence Officer. When Martin Donohoe writes his reminiscences they will make a thrilling story of adventures in real life.

The Japanese, in the Russo-Japanese War, drove the first nail into the war correspondent's coffin. They

massed the foreign correspondents at the base, entertained them lavishly with champagne and cigars, and told them no more than they chose to tell, concealing or inventing according to their own requirements. But Harrison—I forget his first name—a fine type of American journalist, somehow managed to get more information than others, and his book on the Russo-Japanese War has been very widely read. I met him in Yokohama, and we had some interesting talks on the subject. He was convinced that if Russia, which was then as unprepared for war as she was in 1914, could have held out for another two or three months, her army would have been dangerously victorious.

In the Great War the war correspondent was threatened with extinction, almost exterminated. The old recognised custom of affording newspapers facilities for closely following operations of a campaign was ignored ; but after a time special permits were given to a few selected men to go to the front and supply other newspapers as well as those by which they were usually employed. I think that this is how it was done ; I was then too busy with my own job to keep myself informed as to Press matters. One of the most prominent of the selected journalists was Philip Gibbs, now the distinguished novelist. I knew him twenty years ago in Fleet Street, as a remarkably promising young reporter. Not long afterwards he made his mark by ruthlessly unmasking "Dr." Cook, whose story of how he had "discovered" the North Pole created a sensation at the time.

Like the war correspondent, the war artist has had his day. Melton Prior's pictures of the Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars were, in their way, as effective and truthful as Dr. W. H. Russell's letters, and most of his sketches in the *Illustrated London News* were made under fire. Fred Villiers, whom I knew for many years until a few months before his death, two years ago, was another famous war artist. He represented the *Graphic* in

nearly a dozen campaigns. But some of the most sensationaly effective battle pictures which used to appear in illustrated papers, and have done in recent years, were worked up from rough sketches supplied by an actual eye-witness and sometimes from no more than the newspaper accounts and the artist's imagination. In the 'nineties there was an artist of the imagination school, a Swiss, I think, whose war pictures found a ready sale whenever any campaign or "scrap," however insignificant, afforded him excuse for concocting them. I met him one morning in Fleet Street on his way to deliver a realistic portrayal of the so-called "battle" of Omdurman, in the Sudan, a description of which had just appeared in the newspapers. He insisted on taking me to a house of refreshment to show me the work with which he was evidently more than satisfied. He had depicted the commanding officer of the 21st Lancers picturesquely waving his sword in the air as he led the attack on the Arabs. I was personally acquainted with Colonel Martin, and I met him soon after the affair, when he was on leave in London. Apropos of newspaper accounts and illustrations of the occasion, he mentioned that in the excitement of the moment he had quite forgotten to draw his sword, and had not discovered the omission until he had halted the regiment. I cannot recall whether I was in time to prevent the publication of my friend's picture in its original form.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHANGES IN THEATRELAND

THE first time I was ever in a theatre was, at eight years of age, to see a pantomime, *Harlequin Sinbad, The Sailor*, at Drury Lane. Looking back to my early theatre-going days, I recall at least half a dozen playhouses in the West End alone which have disappeared. The Princess's in Oxford Street, where I saw Charles Kean's revival of *Henry VIII* (about 1869) is no more, and there was the Strand, about on the site of the present Strand underground station, noted for its burlesques and extravaganzas. On the ground on which the new Gaiety Theatre, Edison House, and Austral House now stand were three theatres—the Globe (where *The Private Secretary* was produced), the Olympic (which specialised in melodrama), and the Opera Comique (famous for French plays and *opera-bouffe*). Farther west, the old Queen's stood in Long Acre at the top of Bow Street; and Toole's (at another time called the "Charing Cross" and at another the "Folly"), in Chandos Street, is associated in my mind with the first of Barrie's successes, *Walker, London*. Where the Scala Theatre stands now was the original Prince of Wales's Theatre, a dainty little playhouse, successor to a theatre of far less repute. It was there that the Bancrofts attracted the then most fashionable audiences in London, mainly with Robertson's famous, but now old-fashioned, comedies, *Caste*, *Ours*, et cetera. The present Adelphi in the Strand is a glorified revival of the Adelphi of my youth, noted for melodrama. I can look back to the time when the

patrons of the latter were so exacting that the programme included not only a drama, but a couple of farces, and sometimes a music-hall turn thrown in.

Outside the West End were some famous and prosperous playhouses ; notably Sadler's Wells in Rosebery Avenue, which has traditions almost equal to those of Drury Lane, and is now, I hear, to be restored and run as a repertory theatre on the lines of the "old Vic." The Britannia ("The Brit"), in Hoxton, and the Grecian, in the City Road (owned by George Conquest, and the first London theatre in which Kate Vaughan appeared) were recognised institutions in their day. The Philharmonic, Islington (known later as "The Grand"), was one of the first of the Suburban playhouses, and it was there, in spite of its distance from the West End, that *Geneviève de Brabant*, one of the most successful of comic operas (before musical comedies came into existence), with some of the distinguished Stars of the day, ran for over a year. Nearer the West End was the West London Theatre, in a back street close to Edgware Road, a very rough place, but noted for its Christmas pantomimes, of which I saw five. An almost forgotten out-lying playhouse was the Park, a small house between Regent's Park and Hampstead Road, catering only for its own locality. Then, too, there was the Holborn (afterwards known as "The Duke's" and later as "The Mirror") which, after a very unlucky career, disappeared in the late 'seventies ; and farther west, in Holborn, the Amphitheatre had a short life, originally as a circus. The Metropole, Camberwell, was the pioneer of the more modern suburban theatres, closely followed by the Coronet at Notting Hill, which in its productions and class of audience was at one time almost a West End house.

For some fifteen years there was a theatre adjoining the old Westminster Aquarium, which had a somewhat chequered career, first as the Aquarium Theatre, and afterwards as the Imperial, until Mrs. Langtry pulled it to

pieces and built her Imperial, with its marble auditorium, exquisitely artistic draperies and upholstery (all designed by Frank Verity), and a very effective system of lighting by means of electric lamps concealed above a ceiling of amber glass, and round the tiers candelabra specially made in Venice. The latter, which cost about sixty pounds each, when the place was dismantled and the beautiful marble reconstructed for an East End music hall (what a tragedy!), fetched thirty shillings each. I have an affectionate remembrance of that theatre. As Mrs. Langtry's manager, when it was practically rebuilt, I was in or close to it for eight consecutive weeks, day and night, until the opening. I slept, when I had time, in a public house on the opposite side of the road, for which I was fully compensated by Mrs. Langtry's splendid achievement and the glamour of the opening night. By the way, in a somewhat imaginary interview while the work was in progress the facetious newspaper man represented me as having told him, in reply to his question whether I had a family, that I was not sure, but was going home that evening to see if there was still one there. Thus I can boast of a unique experience in having been closely associated with the building and opening of the two finest playhouses in England, Her Majesty's and the new Imperial, the former an extraordinarily profitable, and the latter a financially disastrous, undertaking.

To return to the old and extinct theatres outside the West End, the Britannia at Hoxton had an interesting history. It was for some years under the management of Sara Lane, whom I knew well. She was a remarkable personality. Sara loved her rough audiences, and they treated her with a sort of veneration. Even when there was a serious disturbance in the house, which was not unusual, especially on a Saturday night, she would ring down the curtain and appear in front of it and, with uplifted hand, command silence. Then the performance would proceed in peace. Melodrama was the feature of

the "Brit," but sometimes Mrs. Lane put on Shakespeare, and seldom had cause to regret it. Her annual "Christmas Carnival" was looked forward to every year by her regular patrons. It took the form of a special benefit performance immediately before the opening of the pantomime season, the receipts from which were divided among her stock company. In one of the intervals the audience would signify their affection for particular favourites by throwing tributes on the stage, each bearing a label with the name of the actor or actress for whom it was intended. The night I was there one of a favourite actor's parcels contained a couple of shirts, the leading lady was the recipient of a pair of corsets, and another lady received a parcel of kippers and two pairs of gloves.

Among the old and less distinguished music halls, now almost forgotten, was the Mogul in Drury Lane. It was supported largely by a very rough element from the neighbourhood. I was there only once, and, acting on advice, I left my watch at home, also cash not required for immediate use. The Mogul, like other places of its kind, was connected with a public house, from which it took its name. In later years it was known as the Middlesex Music Hall, which a few years ago made way for the present Winter Garden Theatre. The little Sun Music Hall, an annexe of the Sun public house opposite Knightsbridge Barracks, which disappeared over thirty years ago, got most of its patrons from the Household Cavalry, and was therefore eminently respectable.

And what changes there have been in the construction of 'West End theatres ! One of the most historical features of the English theatre, the green-room, has nearly disappeared altogether. In these days tradition is of little account, and the up-to-date, spacious dressing-rooms provide sufficient accommodation for actors and actresses while they are not actually on the stage, so that those pleasant gatherings of most of a company during the performance are almost things of the past.

And what hotbeds of scandal some of the old green-rooms were ! I heard that notorious and rotund cynic, Harry Kemble (the last of a line of famous actors) remark that the floor of the old Haymarket green-room was paved with the remains of the reputations which Miss — (a bitter scoundrel of the end of the last century) had killed. By the way, when Cyril Maude was in the early days of his career playing at the old Avenue Theatre (now the Playhouse) he was ventilating his views in the green-room on some theatrical subject of the moment when Kemble turned on him wrathfully. “ What do you know about the drama ? ” he asked. “ You are only sucking at its teats.”

And what improvements in providing for the comfort of the audiences ! Her (now His) Majesty’s was the first London theatre to have any effectual system of ventilation and heating ; it also has, or had, an ice-chamber from which cold air could be pumped into the auditorium in hot weather. In the old days the enjoyment of a play was often marred by the violence of the draughts, which sometimes necessitated the wearing of cloaks and over-coats and turning up the collars. And the seating, even in the stalls, was abominably uncomfortable. With the marked exceptions of the old Prince of Wales’s Theatre, under the Bancrofts’ management, and the Haymarket, as redecorated by Bancroft in the ‘eighties, the auditoriums were generally either oppressively squalid or vulgarly garish in their decorations ; and the exteriors, as a rule, were sordidly devoid of any architectural pretensions.

It was also at Her Majesty’s that Tree set a good example in the dignified simplicity of the auditorium relieved by the painted panels on the ceiling, representing the four seasons of the year, which cost some five hundred pounds ; but, owing to their position, they have escaped the notice of most of the audience. The imposing, yet simple design of the exterior of His Majesty’s is still one of the

best of London's architectural landmarks. I remember well the morning in the office at the Haymarket Theatre when Phipps, the architect, submitted his drawings for the "elevation" for Tree's approval or the reverse. I fancy that Phipps and I were both a little nervous as to the result. Tree was never easily pleased, sometimes inclined to be hypercritical; and I knew that the architect regarded this as his greatest achievement—he had previously built some fifty theatres in different parts of the country. As he lay the drawings out on the table, Tree contemplated them for several minutes in silence. Then he exclaimed, "Splendid, Phipps!" and no more. The two words spoke volumes. The design was so tastefully effective that when, after the opening of His Majesty's, the promoters of the Carlton Hotel had acquired the remainder of the site the ground landlords (the Crown) stipulated that the same scheme should be adopted. Hence the uniformity of the whole block.

The act-drops of the old theatres, with their tawdry pictures, some allegorical, were most of them eye-sores, with at least one marked exception, that of the beautiful picture of the minuet scene in *The School for Scandal*, which was a striking feature of Bancroft's reconstruction of the Haymarket Theatre. In the Palace Theatre, opened in 1892, D'Oyly Carte, who built it for English Grand Opera, forestalled much more modern theatres in its architecture, and its interior with fine decorations, imposing auditorium and staircase, wide corridors, and excellent seating arrangements. The theatre made its own electric power and had a perfect heating system, and the dressing-room accommodation cannot be surpassed even in the present day.

The most satisfactory change of all connected with the drama has been in the tastes of the playgoing public, and therefore in the quality of playwriting. Perhaps it will be insisted that the former is due to the latter. If it is, then we are under a big debt of gratitude to the

modern playwright. Eighteen years' active association with theatres, preceded by twenty-five years' constant playgoing, may justify my expressing my views of the acting of to-day as compared with that of fifty years ago. The war, and three years' military work afterwards, precluded my going to a theatre, and now I see the stage from a disinterested and fresh point of view, and delight in the surprisingly good work of actors and actresses of whom I have never heard. As regards "production," the improvement is even more conspicuous. Apart from scenery and lighting, there are marked signs of a higher order of intelligence and artistic sense among producers who have come to the front in the past twelve years.

In fact, theatrical management to-day in England seems inspired by brain as well as by business enterprise and, on the whole, compares very favourably with that of the United States. This reminds me of a little story of some fifteen years ago, when America was indulging in the vogue of Biblical plays, the atmosphere of which was foreign to some of their promoters, who were inspired by no higher motive than box-office prospects. One of these gentlemen had engaged the services of an English producer for a new Biblical play, and wisely gave him a free hand. One day he turned up at a rehearsal, and after a glance at the stage, enquired from the producer, "Say, Mr. ——" (I have forgotten the name), "who are those guys sitting at the table?" "The twelve apostles," was the reply. "Why only twelve?" the American asked. "Gee, twelve are no good on a big stage like that. I'm not out for economy, you know that. Get another twenty apostles, or more if you like."

This recalls another story, of a more recent occurrence. When Channing Pollock's remarkable play *The Fool*, was produced at Los Angeles, one of the great local film producers, who was present at the first performance, asked the author in the vestibule, "Say, what is this

Star of Bethlehem that there's all the talk about in your play?" Pollock explained that it was the star that rose over Bethlehem when Christ was born. "Well," said the film man, "you ought to say so on the programme otherwise people don't understand."

There has been a marked change too, in the social position of the actor. I remember the sensation caused in the 'eighties by Mrs. Langtry (leader of the so-called "professional beauties" of London Society) and Lady Monckton (wife of a knighted City functionary) "going on the stage," and later on when a distinguished actor and an equally distinguished actress were included in the Prince and Princess of Wales's invitations to a garden-party at Marlborough House. Since then peers and heirs to peerages have led, or been led by, actresses and chorus girls to the altar or the Registrar's office, and Society and the Stage have become so mixed up that one hardly knows which is patronising which.

Over thirty years ago Winifred Emery, when just past her girlhood, wrote an article in a paper which I was editing deplored the then modern tendency to take the public behind the scenes of the actor's private life. She insisted that relations of familiarity between the playgoer and the player would have the effect of destroying that element of illusion so essential to the stage; and her views were widely quoted, and were endorsed by leading lights of the profession. But in the present day such ideas are out of date. Numbers of actors and actresses are clamouring feverishly for publicity, apart from their work on the stage. Some of them even retain the services of that peculiar and very modern class of pressman who advertises his employer by puff-paragraphs in the "Society Gossip" of newspapers, and is appropriately known in Fleet Street as a "puff-adder." I recently heard this type of advertisement referred to by a witty journalist as the "*ad nauseam*." He seems to have no difficulty in planting portraits of

his female clients in certain illustrated papers as frequently as he will, far more frequently than the readers wish to see them. And these publicity-craving actresses are not satisfied with paragraphs and portraits. The advertisement pages afford them endless opportunities. Miss This takes us into her confidence as to the soap which she uses in her bath, and Miss That as to her pet remedy for stomach troubles.

I knew the father of one of this type of actress long before she had become famous. He was a devoted parent struggling on a small salary to maintain his family. I met him a few months ago, and, judging from his appearance, he had not derived any benefit from his daughter's state of affluence. When I congratulated him on her success he told me pathetically, "I never see anything of her now, not even on the stage ; I cannot afford to pay for theatre tickets."

Fortunately for these over-advertised actors and actresses, the Press of this country does not indulge in such plain speaking as the American papers do. I happened more than once to meet a theatrical touring company in the States which included two sisters in principal parts. One of these was assiduously puff-paragraphed, and the fact that she was god-daughter of a certain English lady of title was not overlooked. The critic of a Washington newspaper referred to the ladies briefly as follows : "Presumably, Miss — — is a god-orphan, but nevertheless she is a better actress than her sister, the god-daughter of the Duchess of — ." Another instance of the frankness of American newspapers. An English actor whose persistent self-advertisement for some years past has never seemed justified by his actual importance had on his first visit to the States "tired" the American Press, which is seldom inclined to take people at their own value. On his second visit he proclaimed his arrival with a flourish of trumpeting, and a New York paper announced it as follows : "It may

have been noticed yesterday about 2 p.m. that the American Continent rocked perceptibly after a sudden depression on the eastern coast. Mr. — — —, England's 'greatest actor,' had put his foot on shore on his arrival from London."

But, thank Heaven, there are many clever actors and actresses of distinction on the stage of whose private lives and characters the playgoer knows little or nothing, because such folk leave the limelight behind them when they pass out of the theatre. Girls and women of this category perform their ablutions without advertising it. They perhaps find more satisfaction in serious reading at home than in indiscriminate cocktailing in public and, if they are not conspicuous participants in hectic midnight revels, it may be due to the exigencies of golf or tennis. The actress of this type is apt to prefer home-life, with a devoted and permanent husband, to an ephemeral alliance, possibly of only week-end duration, with a temporary lover ; and, when she enters into the marriage state, she is not calculating on the facilities for concluding it. As a mother, she often knows as much about the bringing up of children as any average parson's wife, and does not dress them up in eccentric attire for them to advertise their parent.

## CHAPTER VIII

### STAGE SIDELIGHTS

MY first personal connection with the Drama was when, at the age of thirteen, I "produced" that hard-used classic *Box and Cox*, in the Theatre Royal back drawing-room, ostensibly for the delectation of a birthday party, but actually because I honestly believed that no one could portray the immortal Mr. Box as I could, and that the world had never seen the part of Mrs. Bouncer played as my sister could play it. (And no one had.) I was painfully disillusioned by the manner in which I was received by the audience after the show, and I had for over a week abandoned all histrionic ambition when I discovered that I was liable to a printer for seven shillings for the programmes of my production. My next attempt at acting was in India, only a year before the war, when, to fill an unexpected gap, I reluctantly appeared in the part of a French gendarme, and one of my best friends told me that an East African monkey could have looked more like one. But that was a wanton exaggeration.

While fully capable of regarding the Drama academically, I am inclined, at an age when a sense of humour is essential to prolongation of life, to prefer the lighter to the more serious aspect of my theatrical experiences. These have been as varied as my experience of life in general, ranging from that of Beerbohm Tree's business manager at the Haymarket and His Majesty's to the running of a "fit-up" tour in the provinces and authorship and production of a full-blooded, melodramatic music-hall sketch.

The opening of Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket in April 1897 was a great occasion in the history of London theatres. The crowd in the Haymarket was so dense that mounted and foot police only just succeeded in making a way for the carriage of the Prince of Wales (King Edward). Every seat and every square foot of standing-room in the house was occupied when the splendid red plush curtains, embossed with the royal monogram, "V.R.," were drawn apart and Mrs. Tree appeared to recite the inaugural address, specially composed for the occasion by the Poet Laureate, which the actor-manager's wife preceded with an apt quotation from "Measure for Measure." "Very well met, and welcome."

The following—the final—lines may interest those who are not young or ignorant enough to belittle the greatest Englishwoman in history.

Yet there is One, whose venerated name  
We humbly borrow, and will never shame,  
Who needs no trappings nor disguise  
To shine a Monarch in the whole world's eyes,  
Plays through sheer goodness a commanding part,  
Speaks from the soul, and acts but from the heart.  
Long may she linger, loved, upon the scene,  
And long resound the prayer, God save our Gracious Queen.

Then the curtains were drawn apart, discovering a contingent of the Queen's Hall Choral Society, who, with Miss Clara Butt as soloist, the audience standing, sang "God Save the Queen." This was followed by Miss Butt adding a verse, a fragment of Longfellow, which, intended to refer to the then recent fighting in Eastern Europe, would now be peculiarly applicable to a more recent and more terrible campaign.

Lord, let war's tempests cease,  
Fold the whole world in peace  
Under Thy Wings.  
Make all the nations one,  
All hearts beneath the sun,  
Till Thou shalt reign alone,  
Great King of Kings.

Those who were jealous of Tree's achievements and the distinction which his proprietorship of Her Majesty's Theatre gave him, accused him of appropriating the name of the theatre without authority. Queen Victoria's approval was conveyed by a letter from the Lord Chamberlain, which may still, I presume, be seen in its frame on one of the walls of what was Tree's private office. The designation seems, alas! hardly so well justified to-day as it was when originally adopted.

An extreme contrast in my experiences was six years later, when I wrote a music-hall sketch for a serio-comic lady of the halls, who aspired to a career on the legitimate stage. It provided her with a good leading part, and was tried for a special week at a transpontine music-hall patronised by a rather rough clientele. The actor engaged for the villain's part was taken ill three days before the production. There was no time to do better than rely on an agent who sent me a man said to have played such parts in Australia. The new villain, whose personality did not impress me, started by frankly borrowing a pound on account of his salary, to get his dress-suit out of pawn for the purpose of a supper-party in the piece. Having to refer to his watch in the course of his performance, he also borrowed the less valuable of two watches which I happened to possess; and, it appearing as if a good meal would do him good, I gave him one in a transpontine chophouse.

As host at the stage supper-party, he had to cut up a pie, which, with a view to economy, had been constructed by the property master. It did not occur to me that he might be regarding it in anticipation until I saw him assault it and, regardless of etiquette, put a large portion on his plate before offering any to the ladies of the party. Then, as he realised that it was not intended for human consumption, I saw an expression of horror on his face. But, in spite of his disappointment and unsatisfied appetite, he managed to get through with his part.

On the fall of the curtain I could not refuse his request for another sovereign. When, later on, I went up to his dressing-room to invite him to a real supper he had gone, and I have never seen him or my almost valueless watch again. Having drawn half his week's salary for one night's performance, he was, presumably, satisfied. Next morning, by a stroke of luck, Arthur Bowyer, our resourceful stage-manager, found an experienced actor who, after rehearsing all day, played the part that night.

But that was not our only trouble. The sketch preceded a less artistic turn on the programme—one of those sack-lifting competitions which used to be very popular with the patrons of that house. Each of the six nights the audience was so impatiently looking forward to seeing their friends, mostly market porters, exhibit their prowess on the stage that our play was treated with scant courtesy, which was very disconcerting to the actors. But happily it was better appreciated elsewhere.

Strange things sometimes happen in the auditorium of a London theatre during a performance. I witnessed a remarkable, and at the time unaccountable, occurrence the opening night of a musical comedy which had been brought over by a much-boomed American actress. She was noted not only for her personal charm and the quantity of diamonds which she wore on the stage, but also for alleged cruel treatment of men with whose hearts and purses she had "played fast and loose." It was her first appearance in this country, and she looked forward to achieving an easy conquest of the London public. In one of the stage-boxes were three young men whose dress clothes denoted American origin. When the actress made her first entrance and was received with a storm of applause from a very obvious "claque" in the gallery, the three leant forward in the box and stared at her, all with the same expression of surprised

disappointment, which, owing to their proximity to her, must have been intensely annoying. Later, in the same act, throughout her first song they looked at one another all with the same expression of horror. In the second act, when she started to sing the big song of the play, each of the occupants of the box took out a newspaper and began to read it. The audience was not aware that she cut out the last verse and that her exit was premature, or, as I afterwards heard, she fainted away before she got to her dressing-room. When, after some difficulty, she was persuaded to go on for the last act, the men were all apparently asleep in the box. She managed to struggle through to the end, but did not take the call on the fall of the curtain. It was afterwards rumoured that the three Americans had booked the box by cable from New York and had come over with the definite purpose of "queering" her first appearance in England, being all devoted friends of a young man whose life and fortune she had ruined in America. The play was a distinct failure on its merits, and the lady, so far as I know, never appeared on the English stage again. She is now no more.

While I was associated with the Palace Theatre we had in the variety programme a double turn composed of a middle-aged man and a clever, good-looking girl. The former had a wife, and a very jealous one who had formerly been a distinguished music-hall favourite. One evening, before his turn, the husband sent me a message saying that he would like to speak to me. I went round to the stage and found him pale and trembling with fright. He said that through a hole in the scenery he had observed his wife seated in the centre of the front row of the dress circle; she had previously threatened to shoot him one night while he was on the stage, and he could not start his turn unless she was removed.

If she could shoot at all, the position she occupied was very advantageous, and, knowing something of his

treatment of her, I considered that he almost deserved it. But, as it might disturb the performance, I scribbled a note which I sent her by one of the attendants, saying that I wanted to speak to her about something very important. She knew me, and came out of the auditorium, and I gently persuaded her to leave the theatre, noting that she seemed to have something heavy under her dress. She died before carrying out any shooting scheme which she might have planned.

I have often wondered how much, if any, interest in what is happening on the stage of the theatre is taken by the women cleaners who carry on with their work during rehearsal. Once I was enlightened in this respect. At the Royalty Theatre one afternoon Mrs. Patrick Campbell had finished a rehearsal of *Beyond Human Power*, and one cleaner, who had just arrived, was overheard asking another, "What sort of a ply is it, Mrs. Smith?" "It's a b—— funny ply," Mrs. Smith replied. "What they corl a farce, aye?" enquired the other. "I doun't now what they corl it," Mrs. Smith said, "but Mrs. Campbell, she gets into a bed, and Mr. Titheradge, 'e comes in and sits on a chair, and they start torkin' somethin' about Gawd, and then Mrs. Campbell, she gets angry, and I couldn't 'ear wort they said until Mr. Titheradge jumped up and shouted to 'er, 'Go to h—— and ply the part yerself!'" This was one of the several episodes during the rehearsals of a piece in which the actress-manageress and her leading man differed as to how his part should be played.

Mrs. Langtry, with whom I was at one time associated in her actress-manageress days, probably overlooked one of her many amusing stage experiences in writing her volume of reminiscences. She was paying her first visit with her theatrical company to Jersey (her native place), and gave tickets for the theatre to the old fisherman and his wife who were then caretakers of a little cottage where she occasionally enjoyed a few weeks

of the simple life by the blue waters of the Channel Isles. They were accustomed to treat her with obsequious homage, and when she made her first entrance in the play (*The Degenerates*) the couple instinctively rose from their seats, and it was with some difficulty that they were persuaded to sit down by those whose view of the stage they were obstructing.

I have always regarded ruptures in the matrimonial relations of members of the theatrical profession, such as provide the public with scandals, as very tragic, but the following incident seems to suggest material for a French farce more than a tragedy. Associated with me in Tree's management was a very happily married man and devoted husband, whose wife was perhaps excusably jealous of his unavoidable association with attractive ladies of the profession, she herself having no connection with the stage. One summer, when Tree's theatre was closed for several weeks, the couple took a cottage at some little distance from London, but occasionally he had to go up to London for a night or two on business connected with the theatre. On one of these occasions, an hour or so after he had returned home, looking forward to a restful time with his wife in the country, she called him into his dressing-room, closed the door, and, holding a strand of long golden hair in her hand, said severely, "I have been unpacking your suitcase, and found these on one of your hair-brushes. You will have some difficulty in accounting for them." He could offer no sort of explanation, being at a loss to account for this apparent evidence of misconduct, and the following day he went to Town again, only to avoid a very unpleasant situation. That visit accidentally solved the mystery. Two days previously he had instructed the wardrobe-master of the theatre to brush out the *Hamlet* wigs stored away in the theatre ; and afterwards he had gone out, saying that he would not be back at the theatre that day, and had left a hair-brush, which he had taken

from his suitcase, on the table in his office. The wardrobe-master, not being in possession of a brush for the purpose of his job, had surreptitiously borrowed the one on the table, and, when returning it, had evidently forgotten to comb it out. So those golden hairs were not from the head of any lady of intimate disposition, but belonged to Rosenkrantz or Guildenstern or some other gentleman of the Court of Denmark.

The stage-door keeper is an important functionary of a London theatre, although not "in the limelight." Lessees, sub-lessees, managers, plays, and companies come and go, but he goes on, if not for ever, so long as he lives and gives no serious cause for dismissal. He is almost invariably "in the lease," the servant of the actual owner of the theatre, and, apart from his salary, he can make from £1 to £4, or even more, per week in tips, according to the class of performance. With a revue or musical comedy and plenty of attractive young women who have innumerable and affluent visitors of the opposite sex, the stage-door man can render services for which he is adequately remunerated. Some of these janitors "make a book" for the convenience of members of the company, and I knew one who for some time carried on a little moneylending business until, to his sorrow, he realised that there was no substantial security in an actor's salary.

Among the stage-door people whom I have known personally was William Griffiths, for many years one of the most respected theatrical business managers in the West End ; but somehow, poor chap, he fell on bad times, and was thankful two years ago to get a job in charge of the stage-door at the Strand ; he died soon afterwards.

I knew Barry, the Commissionaires' sergeant, at the Lyceum, who, although one of Irving's most valued servants, never once saw his master on the stage. Then there was MacGill at the Haymarket, under Bancroft's and Tree's managements, a smart, white-haired old

Crimean sergeant. He so implicitly obeyed orders that one day after a matinee, when the company had left, he, as usual, switched off all the lights with the one switch near the stage-door. Thus he left a lady of some social distinction for two hours in complete darkness in a room where he had been told to take her for an interview with Tree, who had gone to dinner and had forgotten all about her. Had she been Queen Victoria herself, MacGill would have obeyed his standing orders.

Now the oldest representative of this branch of the profession is Blake, of the Palace, who has been there ever since the opening of the house with English Opera and is known to variety artists all over the world. His manners are inclined to be martinettish, due no doubt to his having served as a petty officer under "Charlie" Beresford in the bombarding of the Alexandria forts. I had the honour of serving "under" Blake for two years when I was connected with the management of the Palace. George Parrott at the Alhambra comes next to Blake in seniority. "Mac," an ex-Life Guards corporal, has been at the Apollo since the theatre was opened nearly forty years ago. His actual surname—unknown to the host of actors and actresses who have appreciated his invariable courtesy, and sometimes paternal advice—is Mackay. For many years George Alexander had at the stage-door of the St. James's a man who was a painter in water-colour of no mean ability. I am not sure whether he is still there.

A stage-door man who possesses sufficient intelligence must have an interesting insight into human nature. Actors and actresses, particularly the latter, and not only emotional girls, cultivate a habit of chatting with, and, if he is of a sympathetic disposition, confiding in him, so that his acquaintance with the private affairs, friendships, and intimacies of some of the profession is surprising ; and, as a rule, he treats their confidences with remarkable tact and reticence.

I know of a particular case of an actress who became engaged to a young man of very large income ; but he realised that his affection was not so deep as he had thought, also that she would not be welcomed by his family, so he broke off the engagement, and compensated her for her broken (?) heart with a considerable sum of money. When she unwisely boasted of her good luck to the stage-door keeper of the theatre in which she was playing she perhaps did not realise that, had he taken advantage of what he knew about her intimacy with a second admirer while she was engaged to the first, the breaking off of the engagement need not have cost the fiancé anything, and the informer would probably have been handsomely rewarded.

An even more important institution behind the scenes than the stage-door man is the backer, who optimistically planks down his money with a chance of about three to one against his seeing any of it again. The footlights seem to be as irresistible to the would-be backer as an oil-lamp is to the moth. One sees normally level-headed business men, even from the North Country, shelling out large sums of money, the accumulation of many years of hard work, for the fun of running a theatre, in some cases for the advantage of some specially favoured female. At one time a conspicuous figure in the theatre world was a prosperous City merchant who at first treated his theatrical enterprises as a hobby. Gradually he became so absorbed that he neglected his legitimate business and finished in the Bankruptcy Court.

I remember a case in which two brothers, both young men, risked and lost all their means in a musical piece at the Shaftesbury Theatre. In the play which followed it (under the same manager) they were thankful to get into the chorus. A whole volume could be filled with the tragedies of theatrical finance. True there have been fortunes made out of plays—£80,000 out of *Kismet*, nearly as much out of *Charley's Aunt*, £28,000 out of

*Trilby*, and so forth ; but the public know nothing of the enormous losses, except occasionally through Bankruptcy Court reports. The backer often makes his calculations without taking into account the worst that may and sometimes does happen. I recall two productions which ran for only one night, *The Cousin from Australia* at the Opera Comique in 1898 and *Do, Brown and Co.* at the Vaudeville in 1885. There have been others, and of more recent date.

Even leading actor-managers have made their mistakes. George Alexander at the St. James's with *Love's Carnival* (four performances), and Beerbohm Tree, with *The Gordian Knot* (nine performances) and *Flodden Field* (five performances), both at His Majesty's, realised that even their personal popularity could not induce the public to see a bad play. Charles Frohman no longer regarded himself as an almost infallible judge of the value of a play after he brought a piece, called *The Firstborn*, from America ; they had given five performances when his expensive company left Liverpool on their voyage back to the States.

During the run of a play, called *Dr. Antonio*, at the Garrick exactly half a crown represented the money in the house at one performance. I was sitting in the dressing-room of an actor-manager friend who was pluckily facing a disastrous venture. "What sort of a house is it ?" he asked his business manager before the curtain went up. "It's just gone in—one man for the upper circle," was the discouraging information. Another evening the same manager enquired of a member of his company whom he met in the passage, "Has the curtain gone up ?" "I expect so," the gloomy actor replied, "unless the bailiffs have got it."

The most cheerful loser I ever met was a distinguished and very wealthy Russian, over sixty years of age when he started his theatrical ventures. Theatres and plays did not interest him, except as a means of obtaining

engagements for a lady who was quite content with minor parts so long as she could wear smart frocks and jewels on the stage. From first to last these little benefactions must have cost him about £20,000. When assured that a play which he proposed to finance would be a big success, he merely observed, "That does not interest me. I expect no more than that I shall not lose over ten thousand pounds." It all seemed so pathetic. He had quarrelled with his relations and, but for the would-be actress, was so friendless in his old age that those who knew him well were not surprised that he left the whole of his fortune to the lady who had cost him so much in his lifetime.

All sorts and kinds of people suffer from a form of "stage-stroke," which usually proves very costly. At one time I frequented a West End restaurant of no very great distinction, the proprietor of which put up the money for a comic opera production at the Royalty ; that was some years ago. It was a dire failure, and no salaries were forthcoming for the last of the three weeks of empty houses. Although the backer was behind the scenes at every performance until nearly the last, none of the company seemed to know his name, address, or occupation. But the master-carpenter by chance located him, and ascertained that he was hopelessly insolvent and incapable of paying the salaries due, but he, the property-master, and the electrician were determined to get something. They went in a body to his restaurant, and ordered dinner with the best of everything, including wine and liqueurs, and when the bill was presented returned it to the waiter with instructions to give it to his employer with their compliments and thanks.

One of the backers of a touring company with which I was connected was a young City man whose only object in risking a thousand pounds, he told me, was to "get behind the scenes" of a theatre, which he had never

succeeded in doing. At the dress-rehearsal of the piece he was given a seat in the stalls, whence, unobserved by anyone, he found his way to the stage. No one in the company knew him by sight. The stage-manager, discovering a stranger in the wings, innocently obstructing the stage-hands, did not wait to ascertain what right he had to be there, but seized him by the shoulders and put him out of the stage-door. So far as I know, that was the last occasion on which that young man ventured behind the scenes of any theatre.

As a contrast to the backer who risks his money for the sake of a lady, there was a wealthy manufacturer who, not many years ago, to gratify his son's histrionic aspirations, supplied him ungrudgingly with all that he required for the purpose of touring a play in which the son cast himself for the star part. The financial result was as might have been expected, but the generous father seemed fully compensated for the loss of several thousands by his first and pleasing experience of free admission to a theatre.

One of the most remarkable persons I ever met behind the scenes was Oliver Wales, who, as stage-carpenter of the Haymarket, served under Buckstone's, Bancroft's, Tree's, and Harrison and Maude's managements of the theatre. When I first knew him, in 1895, he was no longer at his zenith. He possessed, to put it mildly, the gift of imagination, which he applied to the making out of his weekly bill of expenses (the errors in which were invariably in his favour) as well as to the stories he related, mainly in proof of his own importance. In his latter days mere imagination was succeeded by hallucination.

Every Sunday (actually devoted, I was told, to bibulous conviviality in his suburban residence) we were assured on the Monday had been spent either in his "little place in the country" or cruising on Lord Brassey's yacht, which seemed always at his disposal. He would bring

our stage-manager and me little presents (resulting from his week-end), such as a basket of fruit or vegetables from the "country place," or even smoked haddock from the sea. And on one occasion he forgot that the sea could not produce the oranges he gave us (in a green-grocer's paper bag), and on another there was an oversight in bringing us bags of shrimps after a Sunday at his "country place."

Each Christmas during his tenancy of the Haymarket Tree presented every member of his staff (over a hundred), from the business manager to the female cleaners, with a goose. Immediately after the performance on Christmas Eve all would assemble on the stage to receive their geese from Mrs. Tree. On one occasion Viscount Wolseley, with Lady Wolseley, had been among the audience, and Tree, being personally acquainted with the General, asked him to make the presentations. After the ceremony was concluded, by an elderly cleaner in a black Victorian bonnet curtseying and walking off with her bird, Oliver Wales insisted on delivering a few words of thanks to Lord Wolseley, on behalf of the staff, for having honoured them that night. As the General went out of the stage-door he shook Wales by the hand and wished him good night. Shelton, the stage-manager, and I were close to them. Afterwards Wales turned to us, asking proudly, "Did you hear what his lordship said to me?" We both replied in the negative, and he told us with characteristic imagination. "Lord Wolseley says to me, 'Oliver Wyles,' 'e says, 'I shall never forget them words of yours to-night, not even on the battle-field.' "

Although Queen Victoria never visited a theatre after the death of the Prince Consort, she once commanded a performance of Grand Opera at Windsor, and on several occasions a distinguished London theatrical company appeared at Balmoral where the stage then was inconveniently small and too near the audience. One

of these companies was Beerbohm Tree's from the Haymarket Theatre. Just before the curtain was raised, Tree, whose partiality for "lime" was proverbial, discovered that it was impossible to get more than one limelight into action, and he loudly gave vent to his feelings in language very far from courtly or even parliamentary. Her Majesty, who was sitting only a couple of yards from the footlights, must have heard him distinctly, and the members of her Court expected to see her rise and walk out; but she tactfully pretended to have heard nothing, so that the actor-manager was the only one upset by his *faux pas*.

The Prince of Wales, before he was King Edward, was a fairly regular theatre-goer, but only to see plays which he had ascertained were likely to amuse him. So far as I know, he was only twice present at a first night: at the Haymarket to see *Trilby*, and the opening night of Her Majesty's. On the latter occasion I had just conducted him to the ante-room of the Royal box, and he was admiring its beautiful decorations and furniture when the electric light suddenly failed. It was an awkward moment; there was no knowing how long it would take to put things right, but fortunately it was a matter of only a couple of minutes. The Prince was amused by the accident, remarking that it was difficult to appreciate the decorations in the dark.

It has always been a recognised rule that no public announcement should be made of the intended visit of any member of the Royal Family to a theatre, except when it was for a charity performance. In one case, at least, this rule was broken. A special performance was being given at a certain theatre, and King Edward had intimated his intention of being present, as a compliment to the actress-manageress who was to play the leading part. But she incautiously announced his intention by widely distributed circulars, and the morning before the performance received a communication from



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his private secretary to the effect that His Majesty would not require the box reserved for him. However, in the afternoon, with his proverbial good nature, he reconsidered the matter, and that evening sat rather impatiently through a very dreary play.

Apropos of Royal visits to theatres, I witnessed an occurrence of a domestic character which must have severely tried the temper of a young Princess. Soon after the engagement of Princess Maud and Prince Charles of Denmark (now King of Norway) they accompanied her mother (then Princess of Wales) to the Haymarket Theatre. At that time the backs of the ladies' skirts more than touched the ground, and, as the young couple were following the Princess of Wales up the passage to the Royal box, Prince Charles trod on his fiancée's gown so effectually that there was a distinct sound of a rupture of the material somewhere about the waist. Princess Maud turned round sharply, and I was thankful that I was not the transgressor. But a second later she was laughing over the young man's discomfiture. I sent for the theatre wardrobe-woman, who promptly rendered first aid to the wounded garment.

During a critical period of the South African War I had a special engagement in the *Daily Chronicle* editorial office, but was released for a couple of evenings to assist in the two performances at the Court Theatre in aid of a war charity. At the first performance the then Prince of Wales occupied the Royal box. During the evening I received a telephone message from the *Chronicle* office to the effect that our troops had taken Bloemfontein, which was an event of the greatest importance. Between the acts I went in front of the curtain and informed the audience. The Prince sent for me and enquired as to the source of my information, and seemed a little annoyed that it had not reached him officially; but a few minutes later he received the news by telephone from the War Office.

When King Edward and Queen Alexandra paid a visit to the Palace Theatre the first time that Her Majesty had been in a variety house, she seemed almost as much entertained by the audience as the performance. Observing, to her evident amusement, a stout and florid young man, who had probably dined well, fast asleep in one of the stalls, with his head thrown back and his mouth open, she called the King's attention to him, and they both laughed heartily. Owing to the position of his seat he was difficult to approach, so we did not disturb him. The remainder of the performance Her Majesty frequently glanced at him, and when the curtain had fallen she stood waiting to see the sleeper awaken when most of the audience had left. A few years later I met that man again, and in very different surroundings. It was in the lounge of a Colombo hotel ; he was in a big basket-chair, fast asleep, with his head thrown back and his mouth wide open.

In my first book of reminiscences I referred only briefly to my two years' (1904-1906) connection with the Palace Theatre in its palmy days as a "house of varieties." It was something quite apart from the ordinary music-hall ; one of the most fashionable resorts in Europe and the goal of every variety artist's ambition, whether English, French, German, Italian, or Russian. It was twelve years earlier when I first knew the Palace Theatre. I was present at, and recall the glamour of, the first performance of *Ivanhoe*, with which D'Oyly Carte opened the Palace as a home of English Opera. Unfortunately the enterprise proved unremunerative, and two years later I was present at another first night, a far less dignified occasion, in the same theatre, when Augustus Harris inaugurated a still more unsuccessful venture. He had had no experience of variety business, and had to face a critical and unpleasantly demonstrative audience. Charles Coburn, with his famous "The Man who Broke the Bank

at Monte Carlo," was the only turn worthy of such an occasion. Later on Charles Morton took over the management, and so successfully that a couple of years after the shares were practically valueless a dividend of about thirty per cent. was paid. Under his management, and later on, under Alfred Butt's, the Palace programme included very few ordinary music-hall turns. Among the best of these were Lottie Collins, who made a big hit with "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay," Vesta Victoria, with her "It's all right in the Summer-time," Chirgwin, known as "The White-eyed Musical Kaffir," Horace Goldin, the then world-famed magician, and later on the inimitable Vesta Tilley. All these were as much appreciated by the elite of the Palace audience as by patrons of ordinary music-halls. John Tiller's original "Palace Girls" were a delightful institution there for seven years. Before rodeos were thought of Will Rogers was a great favourite with his lasso and pony, and years before Alsatian wolf-hounds were fashionable pets in this country Mariska Reczy (a strikingly handsome Hungarian, well-known in Brussels) was showing her troupe of high-jumping Alsatians. Pélissier and his Follies first made their mark at the Palace, and Tortajada and Guerrero created a vogue of Spanish dancing. The latter started her stage career in a rough cabaret in Seville when she was selling oranges on the marketplace. Apart from her vivacious exposition of that school of dancing, she took London and the principal capitals of Europe by storm with her entralling beauty. She and La Tortajada were among my many personal friends in my time at the Palace.

In the early days of Morton's management the "Living Pictures" (regarded then as a somewhat daring exhibition) filled the house night after night. Needless to say, for nearly twenty years one of the most attractive features of the programme—to those who could appreciate it—was Herman Finck's splendid orchestra.

In 1905 something like a sensation was caused by a turn at the Palace, known as "The Red Domino," the word "domino" being in this case applied to the mask which figured largely in the success of this very unique contribution to the Palace programme. The lady, who for seven weeks mystified the public and filled the theatre, gave a performance consisting of dancing in front of a row of mirrors, with the Palace Girls round her. She was supposed to be a person of some distinction, determined to conceal her identity. Not only on the stage, but in her hotel, at restaurants, and on her drives in an open pair-horse carriage the red mask covered the upper part of her face, the mouth and chin tantalisingly suggesting that she was more than averagely good-looking ; and on the stage her figure was remarkably shapely. Persons of position in Society sought in vain to make her acquaintance. A well-known City magnate approached me with a view to giving a private supper-party in her honour, at which she would remove her mask ; but there was "nothing doing." The mystery reached its climax when one morning a couple of boys were upset in a boat on the Serpentine, and a lady, wearing a crimson mask, driving through the Park, sprang from her carriage and jumped into the water, swam out and saved them. As a matter of fact, the rescuer had never appeared on any stage in her life ; she was a professional swimmer who, with the two boys, was engaged for the purpose. The real "Red Domino" was no party to the scheme, and was embarrassed, and a little annoyed, by the resultant flood of congratulatory telegrams and visits of newspaper men seeking (in vain) to interview her on "How I learnt to Swim," or some equally appropriate subject. When the evening papers were spreading the news I found her at the hotel with tears in her eyes (I was one of those very few who were privileged to see her eyes) protesting that she could not swim and did not wish to pose as a heroine. She was by nature of a rather retiring



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*From the Painting by Kaulbach; engraved by W. J. Welch.*



disposition, an American music-hall artist of no repute, but a devoted young wife who, for family reasons, had come over here alone, seeking by ingeniously contrived means to augment her earnings. The incident in Hyde Park was worked by an enterprising newspaper man.

I was recently surprised to read that a now prominent theatrical manager had claimed to be the originator of the revue in England. It was at Alfred Butt's instigation, ten years before the aforesaid manager was known in London, that a revue was put on at the Palace on a pretentious scale. *The Palace Review*, written by George R. Sims, was a consistent travesty of topical subjects and events, not a mere pot-pourri of songs, dances and nudity, and those tiresome imitations of well-known actors and actresses, which most producers of so-called revues seem to find indispensable. But it just missed being a big success. The general idea was excellent, Herman Finck's music delicately tuneful and appropriate, the scenery was more than adequate, there was a remarkably smart beauty chorus, and the Palace Girls never looked or danced better, but, alas! it was indifferently "cast," mainly because at the moment the right people were not obtainable. Violet Loraine, who after the first week pluckily took up the leading part, did all that she could with inadequate support. *The Palace Review* was the first of the spectacular form of revue in England, but the genesis in this country of the revue, in the original sense of the term, was ten years earlier, when a remarkably clever skit on the plays and players of the day, *Under the Clock*, by Charles Brookfield and Seymour Hicks, was produced at the Court Theatre.

There was something pathetic in the Palace having to abandon the class of entertainment by which it had earned a world-wide reputation. It was said to be due to an insufficient supply of the high standard of turns required, and to the prohibitive prices of those obtainable. But that was not the only trouble. Like the Empire and the

Alhambra of that time, the sale of alcoholic refreshment was an important source of profit. Not only did the Palace discourage the class of patron which at one time contributed largely to the takings at the bars of the two other houses, but there was a very considerable falling off in the consumption of liquor by the ordinary class. In 1896, during the South African boom, dozens of champagne were consumed there at every performance and the total bar receipts were nearly double those of 1912. However, in spite of the still diminishing consumption of alcohol and the competition of revues—often mere variety shows—and of cabarets, a revival of the old Palace class of entertainment seems more than possible.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME STAGEFOLK

It seems interesting to look back at the beginnings of some of the stagefolk of present and recent times. When I was connected with the Palace Theatre, in its "variety house" days, Cecil Paget, manager of the Crown Theatre, Peckham (now general manager of an important West End theatrical syndicate), telephoned one evening to tell me that there was a remarkably funny comedian in an obscure musical comedy company playing at his theatre. An hour later I was there, and after I had seen Alfred Lester on the stage three minutes I discovered obvious possibilities; a fortnight afterwards he was appearing at the Palace in his famous *Scene Shifter's Lament*. But, doubtless, he would sooner or later have got to the front without my interference, as he had already made a reputation in the Provinces. Anyway, that chance acquaintance developed into a lasting friendship, and a more sincere friend or congenial companion no man could wish for. The news of his death in Madrid was a cruel blow, and to many others as well as myself.

As an actor, he was of course quite unique in his line. His audience never tired of that quaint combination of dry humour and pronounced melancholy, which characterised his performance; and he never required to resort to coarse "gags" to get his laughs. Lester was a man of peculiar temperament, but most lovable disposition. Even in affluent circumstances, he was frequently worrying about something—the part he was playing or going to play, his health, or the Budget. Yet, when he could

think of nothing to worry about, his cheeriness was invigorating, and his sense of humour, which sometimes took the form of caustic cynicism, contagious. And he was a delightful host, whether in his first London home (a big Hampstead studio) or in his last home, the old cottage with its garden and poultry-run on Notting Hill, or at the Green Room Club. As a sample of his cynicism : an American millionaire, who had hired a palatial flat for the London Season, gave a supper party comprised mainly of ladies of flashy character ; and he engaged, at enormous fees, Alfred Lester and Pélissier, with his Follies, to amuse them. After the entertainment the artists were invited to join the guests at supper, but were seated at the other end of the table, and the ladies regarded them patronisingly from a distance. Pélissier was furiously incensed, not only by the insult, but that he should have unwittingly introduced the ladies of his company into such society. Lester, surveying the flamboyant females with an air of amusement, remarked to the Follies' chief in a voice which could be heard by everyone, " I say, Harry, it's rather interesting to see how the poor eat, isn't it ? " Pélissier told me the story the following day.

I was first acquainted with Violet Loraine (now Mrs. Edward Joicey) when she was in the chorus of *A Chinese Honeymoon*. But that does not make her old, or anything like it, now, because she was little more than a child at the time. When I was at the Palace Theatre an actress was required for the part of a serving-maid in a sketch being put on there ; I recommended her, and she made good. Shortly afterwards, when the leading lady in the Palace Revue gave up her part, Violet Loraine, her understudy, took it on at a day's notice and played it with all that " go " and charm which contributed so largely to the phenomenal success of her subsequent career. In spite of her extraordinary popularity (which necessitated the services of eighty special-duty police for her wedding)

and her very happy marriage, she has not forgotten her old friends ; in fact, I was honoured by a special audience of her first baby, then just a fortnight old, and with a head like a ball of beetroot. Now Mrs. Joicey, although occupied with the cares of a nursery and of a home-farm (not a baby-farm) seems very little more than a girl.

It was at the Palace, too, that Margaret Cooper first came into prominence. Twenty years ago, before she had made a reputation, she was at my suggestion invited to appear in a charity concert given there one Sunday. And this had no connection with the fact that her father had for some years supplied my household with some of the best bread ever baked.

I remember making the acquaintance at an hotel at Newquay of a charming family, named Braithwaite, including a jolly, good-looking, healthily freckled girl of about sixteen, the best swimmer in the place. The following winter I happened to see Lilian Braithwaite playing with an amateur dramatic company, with the result that a few months later, when Tree asked me to find a suitable girl to understudy Dorothea Baird in *Trilby*, she immediately came to my mind. Her personality was just what was required for the part, and she gave an excellent performance of it at rehearsal. However, something happened, an incident over which she can now afford to laugh ; but it must have caused her bitter disappointment. It was no fault of hers, or mine, that the proposed engagement did not materialise.

It is over half a century since I first met Charles Hawtrey. No one could have imagined at that time that the rather shy "new boy" at Rugby would develop into an eminent actor whose best asset was an imperturbable sang-froid. The last conversation I had with him was before the War, a few days after the death of one of his brothers. He was—so unlike him—in a gloomy frame of mind. He remarked, "I wonder, old chap,

whose turn will come next, yours or mine." I little thought then that I should survive him.

I knew Dawson Milward when he was a small boy at St. Paul's School. Years later he consulted me about going on the stage, and I offered him very little encouragement, only because of his abnormal height. But Frederick Harrison, then Tree's manager, gave him his first engagement in a touring company with *A Bunch of Violets*, and Milward soon lived down his height.

I did not meet Aubrey Smith (now a friend of well over twenty years) off the stage until some time after his first appearance in London, but I remember the occasion of the first night of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebsmith*, in which he played the part of a curate. When he took off his coat and disclosed a grey flannel shirt with false linen cuffs the audience discovered a new actor who, apart from his exceptional virility, studied detail in his characterisation. Since then he has gone rapidly forward; and, as everyone knows, he has made his mark, not only on the stage, but in the cricket-field and on the golf course. I recall his most remarkable achievement in combining stage-work with strenuous recreation. It was, I think, in 1901 that he played in a three-days county cricket match in Sussex, and each of the evenings appeared in a leading part at the Vaudeville in London.

I have never been associated with Arthur Bourchier in stage-work, but I remember him an Eton boy when he was spending some of his summer holiday in a country house in Surrey, and one evening entertained us in the smoking-room with an imitation of Irving. Later on, when he had just left Oxford, we met again at a dance in Town. We left the house together, and I remember well how, when we were parting at a corner of Portman Square and admiring the effect of a summer sunrise, I asked whether he had any career in view. "Yes," he replied, with remarkable self-confidence. "I am going

on the stage." I wished him good luck, fearing that he might realise, as so many stage aspirants have done, that a successful amateur actor, as he was, may prove quite undistinguished among professional players. But Bourchier's self-assurance was well justified.

Among stage celebrities I never met one who was more disappointing in private life than W S. Gilbert, or a partnership so ill-matched as his with Arthur Sullivan. The latter, in spite of his brilliant achievements as a composer was, in Society as well as at rehearsals, remarkably unassuming and deferential. Gilbert was egotistical and inclined to be overbearing and, although a humorist of the first water, intolerant of others who ventilated a sense of humour ; and he seemed to delight in exercising his wit at the expense of others. There was no subject on which Tree was more sensitive than that of his portrayal of Hamlet, and just after Gilbert had seen it for the first time, Tree unwisely asked him what he thought of it. "Funny without being vulgar," was the cruelly caustic reply. One evening, when Tree was embarking on his successful venture of building Her Majesty's Theatre, I found Gilbert in Tree's dressing-room at the Haymarket, trying to persuade him that it would prove his ruin. The actor-manager, feeling unequal to answer Gilbert's arguments, referred him to me, as I was in charge of the business side of the undertaking. Turning on me almost ferociously, he demanded, "And what do you know about building theatres ?" Then, without giving me time to reply, he continued, "I know all about it, and I have had to pay dearly for my experience. When I decided to build the Garrick I was told that it would not cost more than £30,000, and when it was finished it had cost me nearly double." I happened to know that he had more than once changed his mind as to the plans while the building was in progress, which had proved very expensive, also that in a dispute with his architect he had come off

badly ; and, as politely as possible, I explained that we proposed to avoid such contingencies. He immediately wished Tree good night, but seemed quite indifferent as to the sort of night I should have. As it happened, the amount paid to the contractors for Her Majesty's exceeded the original estimate (£55,000) by about three hundred pounds.

Bancroft was among those who were sceptical as to Tree's venture, but he expressed it less aggressively than Gilbert. I found him one morning outside the Haymarket Theatre, surveying the imposing building on the other side of the street just before it was completed. "Magnificent !" he remarked, "and so dignified. But has it occurred to Tree that all those windows will need cleaning ?" He spoke at the moment only as one who had an eye to details of working expenses. He understood more of the business side of theatrical management than any other actor-manager whom I have known, and, although he never wasted a penny, treated all connected with his theatre with generosity. As an actor, he was delightful, and, as a man, a courteous, large-hearted gentleman of the old school.

Charles Brookfield, one of my oldest and most intimate friends, is remembered more as a wit and occasional author than as a clever character actor ; it would have been otherwise had he not had to retire prematurely from the stage owing to lung trouble. By the way, very few of those who were delighted by "Charlie's" volume of reminiscences knew that many of the witty utterances which he attributed to some unnamed acquaintance were his own. He confessed to me that rather than miss repeating his best *bons mots* he deprived himself of the credit to which he was entitled.

I have a distinct recollection of charming Kate Terry (sister of Ellen, Marion and Fred) as a very attractive *ingénue* under Bancroft's management, and she happened to be the first actress whom I ever met off the stage ;

an epoch-making experience for a boy of sixteen. She left the profession when little more than a girl, to marry Mr. Lewis, senior partner of Lewis and Allenby, at one time a very fashionable firm of costumiers in Regent Street. In the extensive and beautiful grounds of Moray Lodge, on Campden Hill, her garden parties, at which one met most of the notabilities of the artistic and theatrical world, were features of many successive London Seasons ; and in the winter Mrs. Lewis gave delightful dances in the Lodge itself. I remember one of these in particular, because it was then that most of those present first heard of the engagement of Julia Neilson and Fred Terry, both of whom were present. And how superbly handsome she looked that night, at the zenith of her youth and beauty ! By the way, it is not generally known that John Gielgud, the young actor who about a year ago suddenly became famous through his remarkable performance of Romeo, is a grandson of Kate Terry, whose daughter is Mrs. Gielgud ; and, by the way, my father rendered gynaecological service at her birth.

It seems sad to realise that actresses whom I recall as *ingénues* are no longer girls, and alas ! in some cases no longer here. Kate Rorke, with the big blue eyes and fascinating smile, who was later on in her career leading lady in Tree's company, is now a teacher of elocution and acting, and no one is better qualified for the job. Going further back, there were two delightful girls in *The Two Roses* (in which Irving came into prominence). One was Kate Bishop, who died some years ago, leaving a daughter, Marie Lohr, as well known as her mother was. The other, Amy Roselle, who, with her husband, committed suicide in the 'nineties. Later on came Maud Millett, for several years idol of the young men known as the "Crutch and Toothpick Brigade" ; she married an artillery officer, afterwards Brigadier-General Tennant, and died a few years ago. Poor little Rose Norreys, the red-haired, romping *ingénue* of the 'eighties, has been for

many years an inmate of a mental hospital. Ethel Matthews, a source of considerable profit to photographers, retired into private life nearly twenty years ago. When I saw her last she was looking as beautiful although not quite as young, as ever. Then there was Mary Ansell, the pretty *ingénue* in *Walker, London*, the play which brought J. M. Barrie into prominence. He married her, but eventually the union did not prove a success, which seemed the more sad because their country home in Surrey was in a beautiful old cottage with a glorious garden—I knew it well—which seemed absolutely ideal for a real love-marriage. The other *ingénue* in *Walker, London*, was Eva Moore, who afterwards married H. V. Esmond, and to-day appears far too rarely on the stage. Among more recent *ingénues* was Muriel Beaumont, now Lady Du Maurier and a remarkably young-looking mother of charming daughters.

Winifred Emery, as an *ingénue*, is almost forgotten, but, as a brilliantly clever actress, is still fresh in the memory of all but the youngest generation of playgoers. To those who were fortunate enough to be included in her circle of friends she was much more than one of the cleverest and most charming actresses of her day, with a range of portrayal extending from the name-part in that delightful play of the 'nineties, *Miss Tomboy*, to her dignified impersonation of Queen Elizabeth in *Walter Raleigh* twenty years later, with, half-way between, the admittedly best Lady Teazle of the past sixty years. Although daughter of a low comedian of the old school and born and bred in an atmosphere of frank Bohemianism she, on her marriage in 1890 to Cyril Maude, whose relatives and friends received her with open arms, immediately and easily adapted herself to her new surroundings. No Society woman attempted to patronise her, because it was neither necessary nor advisable. She selected her particular friends without taking full advantage of her opportunities; "tuft-hunting" was foreign

to her nature. At those enjoyable Sunday luncheon parties in her perfectly regulated home one met a happy blend of the best of her profession with unprofessional people of social position. There was something peculiarly lovable in her nature, which doubtless contributed largely to her charm on the stage, and it was reflected in her two little girls. When Pamela, the younger, was about six weeks old I asked Marjorie, then about seven years, whether she proposed going on the stage when she grew up. After considering the question for a moment, she replied demurely, "Yes, I think so, but only if Pamela and me can get a joint engagement." She had doubtless heard the term used by her parents in connection with their own stage affairs. When two years ago I heard of Winifred Emery's death it seemed to one who had known her as a healthy, joyous girl and supremely happy wife and mother, intensely pathetic that her life should have ended in months of intense physical suffering.

Here is an almost romantic story : for obvious reasons the lady's name has to be withheld. Most playgoers who saw her on the stage have probably forgotten her existence, and members of her former profession often ask what has become of her. She was more distinguished by her physical beauty than her acting. Her portrait was painted by an artist of considerable distinction, and there was a great demand for her photographs. She wore superbly becoming gowns and furs, and her diamonds were an object of envy in Paris and Monte Carlo as much as in London. But, in spite of the admiration which she excited, she never indulged in the airs of a popular star with those associated with her on the stage. Gifts were lavished on her by wealthy admirers, one in particular, and, as she received a big salary, she succeeded in putting by a considerable amount before she retired from the theatrical profession, after which she was lost sight of. It is interesting that shortly before the War, having cut herself off from her old associations, she

married a man of quite moderate income, with whom she is living a happy, quiet, country life. I am told that on her marriage she disposed by gifts of all the money which she had accumulated, except what she had saved from her earnings on the stage.

Among the popular actors of the end of last century William Terriss was more than a gallery idol ; he was an institution of his day. There was never a better exponent of the florid type of stage hero, but he could do far better than that, as he proved when, to the surprise of those who knew him only at the Adelphi, Harrison and Maude engaged him for a leading part in a delicate comedy at the Haymarket, in which he proved himself a consummate artist. Outside the theatre he had an eye to business. One night I met him as he was leaving the Adelphi, and, inviting me to partake of liquid refreshment, he conducted me to a public-house near Covent Garden market. I soon discovered that he was the owner, not a chance patron of the place, and before we parted I observed something which later on seemed to justify a story that I heard, that when he was too busy to autograph the many photographs sent him by lady admirers for the purpose, his barman did it for him. Strange as it may appear, I am inclined to associate Terriss with Elenora Duse, but only on account of the following incident : Some time after Terriss was murdered outside the theatre there was a very successful Duse Season at the Adelphi. A relative of mine, having failed to book seats, took her chance in the gallery with her daughter. In front of them was a middle-aged couple, evidently East Enders. From their conversation it appeared that the husband was fulfilling a long-standing promise to take his wife to the Adelphi to see William Terriss. It did not occur to them to buy a programme. Anyway, they had probably never heard of Duse, and did not know Italian. While waiting patiently for Terriss to appear, the lady complained that she could not understand what

the actors and actresses were talking about, and her husband explained that that was the way people talked in the West End. During the second act the wife's patience was exhausted. After, in a voice and language quite inappropriate to such an artistic occasion, accusing her husband of having got her there under false pretences and spoilt her evening out, she made for the exit, her better half meekly following.

Augustus Harris, whose name will for many years to come be associated with Drury Lane drama and Covent Garden opera, was one of the most enterprising, farseeing also straightforward theatrical managers of his time. In the earlier days of his career he was an actor, but of no distinction, and he was generally regarded as being much more concerned in the business, than in the artistic side of the Stage. When Forbes-Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell were attracting big houses to the Lyceum with their *Romeo and Juliet*, I was one of a supper-party which included three well-known actors who were critically discussing Robertson's method of delivering Romeo's big speech. Harris was a guest, and at the same table, but he seemed more interested at the moment in a rumpsteak than in histrionic art until one of the actors, perhaps only out of courtesy, asked him for his view of the subject under discussion. Harris put down his knife and fork and, remarking deferentially, "This has always been my idea of the speech," recited the whole long passage without hesitation and most effectively; then he set to work again on his steak.

I feel proud to be able to include among old theatrical friends more than one of those who died for their country in the Great War. Holmes-Gore, whom I knew thirty years ago, and afterwards, as a very sound actor, was one of the first to join up although well into middle age. He was killed not long after obtaining his commission, and left a widow, known on the stage as Elsie Chester, and a daughter, Dorothy Holmes-Gore, who is, I am delighted,

if only for her father's sake, to find making excellent progress on the stage.

Among the very many music-hall artists whom I have known, Chirgwin, who died a few years ago, was one of the most remarkable. His first appearance as "The White-eyed Musical Kaffir"—and he stuck to the description to the end—was before I left school. When I was at the Palace Theatre thirty-five years afterwards his "show" had changed very little since I had first seen him at the old Oxford Music Hall in the early 'seventies. He was still singing "The Blind Boy" to the accompaniment of that quaint little fiddle, and one did not seem to have tired of the black face with the white patch round one eye. There was a peculiar personal charm about him, which accounted to some extent for his popularity with all classes of three generations. Off the stage he was a genial, large-hearted, as well as large-bodied, man with none of the airs of a popular favourite.

A remarkable figure in theatreland for several years before his death was an elderly man, named Nation—I forget his Christian name—who had amassed a considerable fortune in a tobacco factory. It was said that, when well past middle age, he fell in love with a young lady, and, supposing that she reciprocated, acquired the lease of a big house in South Kensington with a view to their marriage. He even, perhaps without her approval, fixed the day and hour for the ceremony, and a wedding-breakfast was prepared in his new house. But the "bride" failed to appear at the church, the breakfast was untouched and the "bridegroom" never recovered from his disappointment. He sought, and apparently found, some consolation in writing plays, which were so hopeless—I have read several of them—that no manager would produce them, even with the inducement of a liberal subsidy. But Nation was not to be discouraged. He hired four or five different London theatres at different times and became his own



BEERBOHM TREE,  
As Svengali in "Trilby."

*Photo by Turner]*

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manager, producing only plays of his own authorship. To say that they "failed to attract" would be an inadequate description of the result. Sometimes as many as a couple of dozen persons would pay for seats, sometimes there would be nothing but "paper" in the house, and little of that. But he did not seem to care. The piece had to be played right through at every performance as seriously as if the house was full, Nation being always there, occupying a stall or box in solitary grandeur and applauding generously. It was a trying ordeal for the company, composed of undistinguished actors and actresses. The pleasure of finding employment for them, and at by no means starvation salaries, and of seeing his plays acted, seemed to compensate him for the loss of many thousands of pounds.

No reminiscences of the English stage of those times could be complete without a reference to Sarah Thorne, sister of that fine old actor, Tom Thorne, who was part author of *Our Boys*, and for many years one of the lessees of the Vaudeville Theatre. Long before Beerbohm Tree founded the School of Dramatic Art in London Sarah Thorne was systematically training stage aspirants at the Theatre Royal, Margate, of which she was lessee for many years. She gave them not only a thorough tuition, but very useful experience in her three stock companies, the Canterbury and Chatham theatres being at one time also under her management. Among the many successful actors and actresses whom she produced I can at the moment recall only Evelyn Millard, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and Irene and Violet Vanbrugh—good enough!

If I were asked to name the individual who, apart from actors, is best known to playgoers of the present and the last generation, I should say, undoubtedly, W. H. Leverton, for many years the presiding genius of the Haymarket box-office. One day, as a boy, he boldly tackled Bancroft, then actor-manager of the

Haymarket, with the proposition that he should be found employment in his box-office. He has been there ever since, and, being still comparatively young, is likely to remain there for many years to come. In the old days, when most of the West End theatres were closed for a month or more in the summer, he utilised his vacation as leader of a concert party at a seaside resort. I first knew him when, in 1895, I became associated with Beerbohm Tree's management at the Haymarket, and I still know him as one of my oldest friends. His invariable courtesy to the public is proverbial, apart from his business qualifications, and his genial disposition, and keen interest in all that concerns his employer, have been appreciated by the five successive managers under whom he has served. Moreover, he is a sound judge of the prospects of a play after seeing it at rehearsal. I hear that Leverton's reminiscences are on their way to publication—probably they will appear before this volume of mine. As a raconteur, he would be difficult to beat. If he can write his stories as well as he tells them by word of mouth the success of his book is a certainty.

Several actors and actresses have augmented their salaries by carrying on some kind of business off the stage, as second-hand furniture dealers, boarding-house or teashop proprietors, dressmakers, etc., etc. The late William (of course "Billy") Wyse, a fairly well-known actor with a permanently bland smile and portly figure, who specialised in butler's parts, earned more money off than on the stage. He was proprietor-editor of an organ of the hairdresser's trade, and in connection with this he also ran an agency for the purchase and sale of hairdressers' businesses. One of the stories of his experiences which he used to tell with his characteristic sense of humour was that, when he was "taking over" from the vender of a toilet establishment on behalf of a client, the purchaser, he found at the back of the shop a large stock of a special face lotion which the outgoing

tenant had found unsaleable. Wyse removed the labels and replaced them with others, specially printed for the purpose, bearing a fancy name which he invented, of a new hair wash, with a description of its merits. Here is another of his stories: Wyse happened to speak French fluently. *The Times* editorial staff, as he told me, were entertaining some French newspaper-men, and a friend of his, connected with the paper, asked him to assist in showing the guests the sights of London, which he did. A few months later he went over to Paris for a holiday, arriving a couple of days before a big review of the Paris troops was to be held on the Champs de Mars. He wrote a letter to the Minister of War on the note-paper of the *Hairdressers' Herald* (or whatever it was called) politely requesting that, as a London editor, he might have facilities for seeing the show. The following morning, to his surprise and delight, a mounted orderly from the Ministry clattered into the hotel courtyard, bringing, as a reply to his request, a ticket for the Press enclosure. All would have been well had not one of the occupants of the enclosure recognised Wyse as the gentleman who had helped entertain him in London; and he innocently introduced him to several other French Pressmen as an important member of *The Times* staff. Unfortunately Blowitz, the then famous Paris correspondent of *The Times*, happened to pass them, and it was evident that he was unacquainted with the supposed colleague from London. To avoid an inconvenient explanation, Wyse slipped away out of the enclosure before the review had started.

The old Bohemian character of the profession is almost a thing of the past. The popular actor is no longer content to dine and sup at a chop-house in or near Covent Garden, but wears dress clothes in an ultra-fashionable West End restaurant, and one no longer hears of bacchanalian festivities and practical jokes such as those in

which Sothern, Charles Matthews, Toole and even Irving (in his younger days) delighted.

Tree used to tell a story at the expense of Irving, as follows: One early morning, after a particularly festive supper at the Garrick Club, Tree thought it was his duty to see Irving safely home. On their arrival Irving could not find his latchkey and, to avoid disturbing the household, resolved to make his entrance through one of the basement windows. The gate at the top of the steps being locked, he proceeded to try to climb over it, and got stuck on one of the spikes. Tree, after trying to dislodge his friend, called a policeman to his aid, and Irving, with his nether garments the worse for their adventure, rang the front door bell and obtained admission in the orthodox manner. One evening I, to my surprise, heard Irving relate a story which was precisely similar, except that in his version it was Tree who was stuck on the railing of his own house, and he, Irving, who obtained his release. I have never known which of the two versions was true.

This reminds me of another story of Irving's Bohemian days, before he had to live up to the dignity of the leadership of his profession. He, Charles Wyndham and "Johnnie" Toole—what a combination!—were playing in the same company at the Old Queen's Theatre in Long Acre. The three had been doing themselves well at the Derby, and at dinner before the performance. Towards the end of the last act Irving had to deliver a speech, standing with his back to a fire. That evening, for reasons of his own, he leant rather heavily against the mantelpiece which, being of flimsy construction, collapsed; and the actor compulsorily assumed a sitting position on the gas-fire, whereby he suffered slight physical inconvenience. The gallery roared with delight, supposing that it was part of the show. The curtain was lowered, and Toole came from behind it and announced with regret that owing to Mr. Irving's

“domestic trouble” it was impossible to complete the performance. I got this story from dear old “Lal” Brough, who was one of the company; and I have not heard it since.

Here is an interesting story about Forbes-Robertson and Modjeska. Some thirty years ago, before the revival of the pastoral play in England, and when the Press was not so interested in the doings of theatrical folk outside their theatres as it is now, Robertson, his brother Ian, Mrs. Ian Robertson, and Modjeska, made up a party for a summer holiday, and went on a walking-tour in Devon and Cornwall. Staying at the only inn of a Cornish village, they were visited by the Vicar, who asked them to contribute to a fund for replacing a church bell by attending a bazaar to be held the following day. A happy idea occurred to Robertson, and a quite considerable sum of money was obtained from admissions to a temporary auditorium in the Vicarage garden in which, after the moon had risen, he and Modjeska gave excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*. For the purpose of the balcony scene a high platform was improvised by the local coastguard, and, with Modjeska as Juliet and Robertson as Romeo, and a full moon illuminating the scene of real trees and flowers, as no limelight could have done, it was probably the most picturesquely effective representation of the classic scene which has ever been witnessed.<sup>1</sup>

What are known as “Tree stories” figure largely in many books of theatrical reminiscences, some of them being pure inventions, and others, which I occasionally read now, are so mutilated that I hardly recognise them. In relating a few stories about my old friend and “chief” in my previous book and in this, I find that my personal experiences provide me with sufficient material. Except when compelled to do so by his theatrical engagements

<sup>1</sup> Since writing this from what I remember of the account given to me by Ian Robertson after their return to London, I find that his brother has told the story in his book of reminiscences.

and when he paid his at one time regular visits to Marienbad in the late summer, Tree never left London if he could avoid it ; anything like ruralising did not appeal to his restless temperament. But one June Mrs. (now Lady) Tree wisely, but too optimistically, decided that it would be beneficial to his health if he spent every July week-end in the country, and she engaged rooms in a farmhouse, near Uxbridge, for the purpose. Tree was to catch a late train each Saturday night and return on the Monday evening in time for the performance at the Haymarket. Mrs. Tree and their daughter, Viola, then about nine years of age, took possession of the rooms on a Thursday, and Tree was to join them the following Saturday night. I rashly undertook to see that he did so. After the evening performance his dresser and I got him into a cab in time for him to catch his train. I was to see him off at Paddington. Directly we had left the theatre he insisted on driving first to the Garrick Club, where he used to sup regularly on Saturday nights. I protested in vain, but he assured me that he would stay there only a minute. When we were inside the building I could not get him out, and after supper we left the club together at well past two o'clock, he promising to catch a train from Paddington leaving at about eleven that morning.

I was at his house at ten, but he was still fast asleep, and when the train left he had not begun his breakfast. There was another train at somewhere between two and three in the afternoon. He would catch that without fail if I would lunch with him at the Garrick. I agreed, as a matter of necessity. By the time we had finished lunch, which seemed unduly prolonged, it was impossible for him to catch the train. However, I concluded negotiations with a cabman (before the days of taxis) to drive him the whole way to the rural retreat. I was looking forward to a comparatively restful time on Monday, with Tree safe in the country, but during

breakfast I received a wire asking me to meet him at Paddington Station by a train which was then due in half an hour. He accounted for his premature return with a tale of woe. He had reached his rural destination late in the evening, very thirsty, and there was no whisky in the house. It was a dreadfully dull place, he declared, so he had gone to bed at nine. At eight next morning he was prematurely disturbed, because Viola had gone out early to pick wild flowers and had picked nettles. He concluded pathetically with, "As I am no good at doctoring nettle-stings, I thought I had better come back." So far as I can remember, that was his first and last "week-end" in that farmhouse; I am sure it was a great disappointment to his wife and child.

Tree's somewhat erratic habits, perhaps excusable by his artistic temperament, must have often upset his wife's domestic arrangements; but she would never admit it. In this connection he gave birth to an impromptu epigram, which one occasionally hears now used by people who are ignorant as to its authorship. One day at Her (before it was "His") Majesty's, when his thoughts were entirely absorbed in some new scheme, they were interrupted by a telegram from his wife (before the telephone was installed in their house) reminding him that he had promised to get home to lunch, as some rather important guests were expected. After reading the message he tore up the telegram irritably, put on his hat and went out of the room, muttering, "Domesticity is the curse of Art."

Tree did not profess to take any interest in household matters beyond the providing of wine and "smokes," and, as he could never make time to attend to either, sometimes just before a Sunday luncheon-party the parlourmaid would remind him that there was quite insufficient liquid provision for such an emergency, and

he would send out one of the servants to a neighbouring hotel to save the situation. He occasionally found himself in a similar predicament as regards cigars. On one occasion I was invited to a supper-party at their house after the performance. He left the theatre before I did, and, when I was leaving, it occurred to me that he might have forgotten that some of his guests would require cigars. On my way I stopped at a restaurant, bought fifty, and put the flat box under my greatcoat. Tree was waiting anxiously for me in the entrance hall of the house, and my arrival was evidently disappointing. "I haven't a cigar in the house," he groaned. "I thought you might think of it." "Perhaps these will be good enough," I replied calmly, taking the box from its place of concealment; and his gratitude was pathetic.

I used to hear some good stories about Tree's peculiarities in the earliest days of his stage career from an old actor who had shared very humble lodgings with him. One evening they and another struggling member of the profession, who lived with them, were preparing their evening meal, and Tree, while cooking a sausage on a toasting-fork, suddenly took umbrage at something that one of the others said. Carrying fork and sausage, he strode out of the room and into the street without his hat, but he was followed and prevailed on to return, if only to complete the culinary operation. On another occasion the three had resolved themselves into a committee of ways and means, and discovered that their combined assets were under two shillings. "Never mind," said Tree, "we will go and raise some money." He conducted them to the City on foot and left them outside his father's office. In a few minutes he returned with a sovereign in his hand. By means of ordering three glasses of ale he changed it at the nearest public house, and then gave each of them six shillings and eightpence, a third of the amount which his father had

given him for himself. Tree was always generous, whether he could afford it or not, or whether with a sovereign or a hundred pounds. If his "backer" for the time being had lost over a play, Tree was more distressed than the loser. When money had been rolling in, thanks to the success of *Trilby*, and there was a considerable sum to Tree's credit, he suddenly sprung it on me that he wanted to draw a cheque for two thousand pounds. He remembered that a few years previously a backer had lost that amount over one of his (Tree's) productions. There was no actual liability to repay; it was only to relieve his mind.

Apropos of the generosity (not only as regards £. s. d.) which was a trait in his character, although not conspicuous, I had at least one personal experience. The manager of the New Theatre at Cambridge had induced him to celebrate the opening of the house with a special matinee performance of *Hamlet*. It was a big undertaking. A company had to be selected and rehearsed, several truckloads of our *Hamlet* scenery were carried to Cambridge, and all concerned had to leave London at an inconveniently early hour and get back in time for the evening show of *Trilby*, then running at the Hay-market. This involved the chartering of two special trains. When the evening show had finished Tree was tired out, as most of us were, and it was observed that he omitted to express his approval of the engineering of the Cambridge visit, which went off without a hitch. As I was wishing him good night, he said rather perfunctorily, "You are coming home to supper with me," an invitation formula to which I was well accustomed. I asked to be excused on the ground that I had invited some friends to sup at my flat, to celebrate my birthday, which happened to coincide with the event at Cambridge. He made no remark and seemed annoyed. We had just started supper a few minutes before midnight when there

was a knock at the door of the flat. A cabman had brought a hurriedly scrawled note from Tree: "I am most grateful to you for all you did to-day, and so sorry that I did not tell you before. I hope this will reach you in time for me to wish you many happy returns of your birthday." That was a characteristic bit of Tree at his best.



A CARICATURE OF BEERBOHM TREE.  
Watching a rehearsal from the Gallery.

## CHAPTER X

### BY THE WAY

IT seems natural that many of my countrymen who know little more of America than what they read in sensational newspaper cablegrams, or see in an unpleasant type of American tourist, should be prejudiced against the land of the Stars and Stripes. An English theatrical company arrived at New York when I was there, which included that delightful old comedian, William Blakeley. It was the first time that he had crossed the Atlantic, and he had been persuaded with some difficulty to do so. After stepping off the ship's gangway he stumbled over some obstruction on the quay and fell on his head. "I knew I shouldn't like the damned country," he groaned sulkily as he picked himself up.

The American people is not composed entirely of charlatans, vulgar millionaires, habitual divorcees, immoral film stars, religious fanatics, wild baseball players, and corrupt police officers. It has been my privilege to know many others, both in their country and my own. In Washington and New York I met some of the best type of American at dinner- and luncheon-parties. At Boston I had a very interesting experience of Harvard students at a luncheon-party given by one of them; and I recall a delightful week-end visit at the country home of Mr. Hassard, then President of the New York Polo Club, where I observed that not one of the house-party, over a dozen, bragged about anything, or even spoke with an American accent. Some of the clubs of

which I was a visiting member might have been replicas of good London clubs, but for, in one or two cases, being a little more ostentatiously luxurious. The Arts of Philadelphia, which I used more than any other club over there, was typically English in its appointments and general comfort. Its members included well-known painters and writers, but there was nothing Bohemian in their appearance or conduct.

As regards their code of etiquette, the best American clubs are equal to ours, although they may have less formality in asserting it. For instance, when I was in Washington there was a good story about the famous Metropolitan Club, to which I had the *entrée*. In the smoke-room after lunch a member indiscreetly told a by no means complimentary story about a certain Washington lady. An acquaintance of hers, also a member, who heard it, knocked him down. Of course the aggressor had to come before the committee, and, as it happened to be meeting that afternoon, no time was wasted in formalities. Each of the two members having been heard, the committee, although in their hearts warmly approving of the drastic manner in which the man had championed the lady, had to uphold the dignity of their club. It was then three and a half hours before dinner, and they suspended him for exactly that time. When, on the expiration of his sentence, he returned to the club he found an invitation to dine that evening with one of the committee, who had also invited the other committee-men who had taken part in dealing with his case.

This easy way of disposing of a troublesome club-member recalls an interesting contrast in our country. Some years ago a member of one of the best clubs on Pall Mall developed insanity and amused himself by throwing library books through a plate-glass window into the street. As it was a "members'" club, he was part-owner of the books and the window. The only

remedy was to deprive him of his membership. This required a resolution of expulsion to be passed at a special general meeting, of which fourteen days' notice had to be given. But fortunately the gentleman's relatives persuaded him to resign his membership ; otherwise he might have put half the club property into the street before the expiration of the fortnight.

Needless to say, the best type of American is not monopolised by select drawing-rooms or clubs. Culture and large-heartedness, as I found, are not a matter of class, and even among the rougher type, if you remove the outer crust of aggressiveness and affected hustle, you will probably find underneath a human being with as much soul as, and perhaps more than, the average Englishman ; likewise, strip off the veneer from some of their Society leaders, and all that remains is unadulterated vulgarity.

I am thankful to be one of those who can appreciate the American sense of humour—at any rate, certain forms of it. While their professional humorist who fills volumes with deliberately thought-out jokes strikes me as merely tedious, the spontaneously expressed dry humour in the casual remark of some ordinary man or woman is delightful. This is not the speciality of certain persons, but seems general. In a small way I had one of my earliest experiences of it on the day after my arrival in the country when (as Beerbohm Tree's manager) I had to find a very small and very black negro boy for one of our plays. I enquired of the manager of my hotel whether he could help me, emphasising the colour qualification. "That boy is right here in this hotel," he said. "He's so black that a bit of charcoal would make a white mark on him." But their sense of humour has lately seemed incompatible with the present-day boast of very many Americans that it was their country that won the Great War.

Although I have travelled more widely than most people, my acquaintance with the French capital has been limited to some half-dozen flying visits and occasionally breaking journeys to other places on the Continent. When, before I was twenty, I saw Paris for the first time it was just beginning to recover from the devastating effects of the Commune's brief Reign of Terror. Here and there workmen were busy on restoration work, but most of the ruins of historical public buildings and of mansions and shops remained just as they were when the Republican Government asserted its authority and its troops mercilessly shot down the Communists in hundreds.

Incidentally I then made the acquaintance of the notorious Mabille Gardens, the principal attraction of which was the somewhat flamboyant dancing of the lady visitors and of specially hired performers of the same sex. The dance known as the Can-Can was then all the rage, and the dresses worn for the purpose at the Mabille were far less discreet than those of the French troupe which appeared in the same dance at the Philharmonic Theatre, Islington. On my second visit to Paris, in 1878 (during their first great exhibition) the Mabille was still attracting British tourists and others, but it was the last year of its existence. The object of that visit was not to see the exhibition, but to reason with a particular friend who, suffering from a "broken heart," was hesitating between shooting himself and going to America, which did not seem complimentary to the Stars and Stripes. I persuaded him to do neither, but to return to England, and a year later he married the lady in the case, who proved one of the best wives and mothers I ever knew. To return to the gayer aspect of Paris: the Moulin Rouge, eight years after the closing of the Mabille, started as an open-air night resort for seekers after "gay life," my countrymen included. I cannot remember whether it was during my first or second

visit to Paris that I saw the then Prince of Wales enjoying himself at the Mabille while the French President's carriage waited for him outside. I noted that he found particular amusement in what was evidently his first acquaintance with an aerated water syphon, a novelty which had not then reached London. My third visit to the French capital was in circumstances which were incompatible with going to any of its night resorts. But, as a contrast, thanks to an acquaintance, one of the secretaries of the British Embassy, I incidentally on that occasion obtained a special letter from our Ambassador, Lord Lyons, by which we enjoyed the then rare privilege of admission to that portion of the world-famed Sèvres Pottery Works devoted to a certain process the secret of which was jealously guarded. At the time I was particularly interested in the potter's art, but I had no thought of taking an unfair advantage of what I was permitted to see. Any way, I was not competent to do so.

I have followed remarkable developments of some of the now favourite English holiday resorts. The happiest times of my life were at Lynton and Lynmouth, long before the "English Switzerland," as they describe themselves, had its little railway to Barnstaple. In those days the two adjoining villages were reached from the outer world by four coaches (about twenty miles' drive in each case) from Barnstaple, Minehead, Ilfracombe, and (for two summers only) Dulverton, and by a little steamer from Bristol. Lynton and Lynmouth had then only three families of resident gentry, and the summer visitors numbered a few dozens ; there were no houses on the Valley of the Rocks Road, and clotted cream cost only eightpence a pound. Going further afield, I knew Grindelwald long before it had "winter sports" or a railway connecting it with Interlaken, from which we used to drive by diligence ; and I climbed the then rough path up from Lauterbrunnen to Murren

before there was any other means of reaching the summit. Forty years ago, when the novel *Dr. Antonio* had just brought Bordighera to notice, and it was only a fishing-town with one good hotel, I made my first acquaintance with the place. I recall a moonlight excursion in the olive woods behind the town, in the course of which a charming English girl and I somehow lost our way. Years later, when sitting out at a London dance with a young married partner, we came to the conclusion that we had met before—in the olive woods near Bordighera.

I knew Berlin in the days of Wilhelm I, grandfather of the last of the Kaisers, when it was one of the dullest cities of Europe, with no inducements to gaiety beyond one music-hall and a public dance-hall, known as the Orpheum, somewhat on the lines of, but more dissipated than, our Argyll Rooms. I was in Berlin four years ago, and found that, for luxurious hotels, restaurants, shops, and places of entertainment of doubtful respectability, it had some justification in claiming to be equal to Paris at its best, or to Vienna before the war.

One of the most sensational occurrences of my younger days was the murder, in 1882, of Sir Frederick Cavendish, the Irish Secretary, and Burke, the Under Secretary, when they were out for a walk in Phoenix Park, Dublin. Some of those connected with the crime were traced through an informer, named Carey. For his safety he was secretly shipped to South Africa, but he never landed. O'Donnell, a Fenian, who had been told off for the purpose, got on board the vessel and shot him dead. The assassin was arrested, brought back to this country, and hanged. Not many hours after the execution the prison doctor, Dr. Gilbert, who was present, told me that he could not have imagined it possible for a man, as to whose guilt there was no question, to go to the gallows as coolly as O'Donnell had done. But that is not so



A BIT OF "ENGLISH SWITZERLAND."



[P. 178]

LYNMOUTH.



extraordinary in the case of any man, or woman, dying what they regard as a martyr's death for the sake of some "cause," be it good or bad. I had it from an eye-witness that the bravest of the spies executed in London during the war was a German who had risked his life for his country, while the most terrified, as he was taken to be shot, was of neutral nationality, and had been actuated only by the prospect of remuneration.

Young as I was at the time, I took a keen interest in the famous Tichborne trials: first the action brought by Arthur Orton, a Wapping butcher, whose bogus claim to the Tichborne title and estates lasted nearly a year, and the second the trial of the claimant on a charge of perjury—the latter, after more than a year, resulted in his being sentenced to penal servitude. The Tichborne Case was remarkable not only for the impudence of the claim and the unprecedented duration of each of the trials, but for the excitement they caused among all classes of the community. While a large majority of those who studied the case were convinced that he was a fraud, many of the minority had an almost fanatical belief in him. Families were divided, old friendships broken, and, according to police court reports, heads broken, too, through the difference of opinion. There were several cases of persons losing their reason. Lord Onslow, who supported the claimant financially, was ruined, and Dr. Kenealy, the Queen's Counsel who defended him in the perjury trial, was disbarred for persistently insulting the Bench. Orton, not long after his release from prison, died a pauper.

The famous Druce Case of 1908 was somewhat similar to the Tichborne Case, nearly as sensational, but not so dragged out. It will be remembered that it was a bogus claim to the Portland Estates, depending on an ingeniously conceived plot worked, as it turned out, from America. I have a particular reason for remembering

it but am a little hazy as to the details, because at the time my thoughts were very much occupied by another affair, and my newspaper reading was more or less in abeyance.

One evening in a London theatre, with which I was associated at the time, an American got into conversation with me in the *foyer* between two acts. He told me that he was a New York lawyer paying his first visit to London on business. I have always been interested in meeting United States lawyers, and have known some first-class rogues among them ; also others. I wondered which he might be, and was greatly surprised when he offered me an opportunity for satisfying my curiosity by, when the show was over, giving me his card and inviting me to lunch with him the following day at the Savoy. For some time during the luncheon we talked on general subjects ; then he, quite casually, as it appeared, enquired whether I was interested in the Druce Case, which was occupying a lot of space in the newspapers. I told him that I had not followed it closely. Later on he remarked, as if it had no connection with the case, that perhaps I was acquainted with J. G. Littlechild, the then eminent private detective ; and he more than hinted that, if I was on friendly terms with him, I might do him (the American) a service for which I should be remunerated. It would not have been surprising for an American lawyer to do business with the man who for some years had been London representative of the world-famed Pinkerton's Detective Agency of New York ; but why should he not deal with him himself, instead of seeking my intervention ? And it occurred to me as curious that this American with whom I had been acquainted less than twenty-four hours should have supposed that I knew Littlechild, who, as it happened, was one of my intimate friends. It looked as if he had been enquiring for anyone who was well acquainted with the celebrated detective, and that someone—I never

found out who—had put him on to me, which would account for his addressing me in the theatre.

My suspicions were aroused, and, being far from flattered by the American's offer, I lost no time in telling Littlechild all about it. His eyes twinkled, and he twisted the points of his waxed moustache as he informed me that he was professionally concerned in the Druce Case on behalf of the Portland family; that he knew all about my American acquaintance, who was representing a New York syndicate financing the claimant in the case and was particularly interested in a certain man who was expected to give evidence at the trial in a few days. The American, he observed with a sarcastic smile, doubtless knew that he (Littlechild) was by his investigations causing serious inconvenience to the claimant's case, and therefore to the syndicate. Eventually, if my memory is not at fault, the sensational cross-examination of the witness referred to resulted in the sudden collapse of the case for the claimant and in him (the witness) leaving the country rather hurriedly. Presumably the American lawyer left about the same time. Any way, I never saw, or heard of him again. Doubtless he was only doing his duty as representative of his employers.

That was probably one of Littlechild's biggest cases. His smallest, I suppose, was when I asked him to act for a young acquaintance in her divorce proceedings. He obtained the necessary evidence, and his bill amounted to only fourteen shillings. Knowing that the girl was hard up, he refused to charge more than "expenses out of pocket." But that was not all. When he found that she had not got a solicitor, he introduced her to one of the most eminent members of the profession, who not only charged her nothing more than the court fees which he had to pay, but got a barrister to hold the brief for a nominal fee. So it cost my young friend just under eight pounds to get rid of a very undesirable husband!

My friendship with Littlechild had the additional advantage of an acquaintance with his particular chum, "Sandy" Swanson. When the one had been Chief Inspector in the C.I.D. the other had been one of its sergeants. I first knew Swanson when he was Superintendent of the C.I.D. His career was particularly interesting. When he was a uniformed constable, with no thought of getting detective work, a blind beggar to whom he had rendered some slight service put him on to a couple of criminals with whom the informer had served a term of transportation in Australia. Swanson was taken off ordinary police duty to follow up the men, which resulted in his ultimately hunting down one of the most notorious gangs of high-grade criminals in Europe. Littlechild died five years ago, and Swanson last year.

A little over twenty years ago there were several so-called private detectives of a quite different calibre to Littlechild's. They specialised in divorce, and sometimes manufactured the necessary evidence. At that time the Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden Theatre were their favourite hunting-ground. "Promenade Concerts. Husbands Watched," followed by an offer of the services of a particular detective, used to appear in the "Agony Column" of a respectable daily paper. The man, formerly a solicitor's clerk, described himself as "Slater," but that was not his real name.

After he had figured very discreditably in several cases, his methods reflected so badly on the genuine private detective's profession that three of the most reputable of them, all ex-members of the C.I.D., lead by Littlechild, got on to him, and, thanks to their diligence, two of his employees were convicted of having (at Plymouth) got a married man under the influence of liquor and then induced him to commit an act of misconduct, thus manufacturing evidence by which his wife could obtain a divorce. There was no proof that

they had acted under their employer's instructions, but the Slater Case created such a sensation that "Slater" closed up his office and retired into obscurity, as did two other individuals of his kind. From facts which had come to my knowledge I was able to supply Littlechild with some of his material for the *exposé*.

The Baccarat Case was one of the most sensational society scandals of my time, remarkable if only because the Prince (Edward) of Wales appeared in the witness-box. It was the second occasion on which he did so ; the first was in the Mordaunt Divorce Case, to which I have already referred. In spite of the verdict, a considerable number of sensible people were convinced of the innocence of the plaintiff, Sir Gordon Cumming, including, of course, the lady who, directly after the trial which ruined his reputation, announced that she was going to be his wife ; and it proved a very happy marriage. Three years ago I regretted to read of her death.

In and about the 'seventies there was almost an epidemic of often frankly expressed disrespect for the Royal Family. It took the form of viciously scandalous stories which some people thought it "quite the thing" to have heard and to repeat, utterly careless as to whether they had any actual foundation. And publications reflecting unpleasantly on the Royal Family were obtainable in the least respectable bookshops. Two of them, *The Coming K*— and *The Siliad*, had enormous sales. They were obviously by the same author, written in verse, the scathing satire of which was undeniably witty, but in atrociously bad taste. I must confess to having read both of them. I lately heard that one of these books had changed hands at two pounds within the past twelve months. Two shillings was, I think, the original price.

I do not profess to be specially informed about Society

scandals, but I can vouch for the following story, which is a good instance of how the Royal Family satisfies itself as to the character of persons who attempt to encroach on its entourage. In comparatively recent years a lady, supposed to be "full of money," but of no sort of social position, interested herself in a charity fund then warmly supported by ladies of the aristocracy, and she gave up much of her time to the work. Mrs. —— was getting on swimmingly with her new and distinguished acquaintances until one of them, connected with the Court, received an intimation from a certain personage that her friendship with Mrs. —— seemed undesirable owing to the lady's peculiar associations. Obviously, information concerning them (no mere scandalous gossip), then already in my possession, had also reached the highest quarters. The aristocratic members of the fund's committee promptly backed out of their acquaintance with Mrs. ——. Not long afterwards the lady and her husband took up their residence on the Continent. Should this volume happen to reach exalted circles of Society, the principal figure in my story will be easily identified; but the details as regards her "peculiar associations" may not be so generally known.

By the way, I used at one time to hear good stories (from a reliable source) about some of the peculiar letters occasionally received by the Prince of Wales (King Edward). He took a keen personal interest in the creation of the Royal College of Music, and wrote to all the provincial mayors in the country asking them to open local funds for the purpose. The letter was headed only "Marlborough House" (with no "London"), and, of course, signed "Albert Edward." A certain Lancashire mayor addressed his reply to "Albert Edward, Esq." ; and, after regretting that he could not accede to the request, as his time was fully occupied, he added that he was afraid his letter might not reach the person to whom

it was written, owing to the address given by him being apparently insufficient.

In my chapter on "Victorian London" I have casually alluded to a little Bohemian coterie which used to frequent Stone's Chop House in Panton Street. It has just occurred to me that it is worthy of more consideration. Charlie Brookfield was the most regular attendant at, and leading light of, those pleasant gatherings. Occupying a particular chair in which he had a sort of proprietary interest, he entertained us with his wit, sometimes caustic cynicism.

Another interesting member of our coterie was Egmond Hake, in former days a well-known writer and lecturer on political subjects, but, finding it impossible to adapt himself to modern conditions, and being an incurable pessimist, he in his last years drifted into deplorably low water. Whatever his circumstances at the moment, and, in spite of a depressingly gloomy expression of face and voice, he could occasionally be as witty as Brookfield. Our conversation turned one day to a man who was then posing (with pecuniarily successful result, so far as he was concerned) as a leading authority on Art and the Drama. Someone remarked on a peculiar laugh which he had cultivated. Hake explained it. "You see," he said in his doleful voice, "— is not quite a gentleman, and he tries to laugh it off." When Hake was more hard up than usual one of his friends got him a job as advance agent to a theatrical touring company, for which he was eminently unsuited owing to his pessimistic disposition. When he was calling at a provincial newspaper office, with some advance paragraphs, the editor asked him, "Now, Mr. Hake, tell me in strict confidence, what do you yourself think of this play?" "Damned silly," Hake replied gloomily. It was quite true, but not exactly what an advance agent should have said. Among others of that coterie were Littlechild and

Swanson, the great detectives to whom I have already referred.

There was a bar as well as the tables which we used in the wine-room at Stone's, and it was well patronised. One day, after hunting in vain for an actor to play a peculiar type of character-part in a play going on tour, I noticed a young man, whose face, voice, and manner seemed exactly to fit the part, refreshing himself at the bar. I had no reason to suppose that he was an actor, but chanced it by introducing myself. Not only had he played character and low-comedy parts, but he was disengaged. So I engaged him forthwith, and thus made the acquaintance of Dallas Welford, then quite unknown in London, who for years past had been drawing big salaries in the States. At this moment he is in London, making a big hit at the Gaiety Theatre.

By the way, while he was playing that part on tour he and I were chatting in the smoking-room of a provincial hotel on a market-day. A burly farmer, sitting at the same table, seemed attracted by Dallas's personality. After scrutinising his very comic visage, he addressed him. "Excuse me, sir, but what may you be?" he asked. "Guess," Welford replied genially. "Travelling in artificial manure, perhaps?" "No, I am only an actor, playing at the theatre here." "Is that so? Then I'll come and see the play. I'll bet you'll make me laugh." And after a few seconds' thought he added, "And maybe you'll make the missus laugh, too. She ain't laughed these twenty year." That evening, after the show was finished, I looked out for our farmer friend among those who were coming out. There he was, laughing heartily, but accompanied by a fat, sour-faced woman who was asking him indignantly what he had found to be amused at.

Among our occasional visitors at Stone's was a young struggling, but quite promising, painter. One morning

he came in in great glee to tell us that he been invited to take one of his pictures up to Scotland, to show to a firm of distillers who wanted one that would serve to advertise their whisky. He had just the thing for them, and only required the money to pay his fare, which was provided. He was to start that night. The next we heard, or rather read of him in the newspapers, was that on his way back to London he had somehow fallen out of the train and been killed. He had sold the painting for fifty pounds, only forty-seven of which were found on the body ; so we concluded that after receiving the money he had celebrated the occasion expensively. The picture proved a remarkably effective advertisement, still seen in many a licensed house, called "The Whisky of His Forefathers," showing a young Highland laird, with a bottle of whisky on a table before him, looking up at portraits of his ancestors.

The recent attempt to distribute Bolshevik propaganda literature among the troops at Aldershot, and elsewhere, reminds me that in 1889, when the then Socialist leaders—including John Burns—were busy with their agitation, which sometimes resulted in riots, some of them actually got into Wellington Barracks and harangued the soldiers. Soon afterwards it became evident that there was serious disaffection in the battalion of Guards stationed there, and, with only a day's warning, it was sent out to the West Indies.

In this connection I can tell a story which appears not to have reached the newspapers or, even, the Service clubs at the time. That year there was a partial strike in the Metropolitan Police. The evening when it began the Prince (Edward) of Wales attended a gala performance at Covent Garden Opera House, and the crowd which gathered outside was, after the Prince had arrived, gradually increased to a mob by hundreds of roughs who, taking advantage of the Bow Street police having refused

to go on duty, started breaking windows. Mounted and foot police (non-strikers), summoned from other districts, were insufficient to cope with the disorder, which became so serious that the cavalry regiment at Knightsbridge Barracks was called out, and the mob was dispersed before the end of the opera performance.

I was on the scene (as I was in those days on that of any big disturbance), and when the cavalry arrived I observed that, although the regiment appeared to be at full strength, there were only two officers, which seemed unaccountable. Nearly a year afterwards one of its non-commissioned officers explained it to me. At the time there was marked ill-feeling between the Household Cavalry and the Footguards stationed in London. That particular day the Life Guards at Knightsbridge Barracks, having reason to suppose that the battalion at Wellington Barracks, to which I have alluded, might make trouble, and hoping that they would be called out to suppress it, arranged among themselves not to leave barracks that evening. When the order came to turn out it happened that there were only three officers in barracks, who of course accompanied the regiment. They covered the distance at a smart trot; it was raining and the road was slippery, so that in Piccadilly one of the officer's chargers skidded and fell, and the rider was sufficiently hurt to have to return to barracks in a cab.

Among my most intimate Bohemian friends when I was a young man was a rather remarkable character, some years my senior. Alsager Hay Hill was son of a country gentleman, had been educated at public school and Oxford, and wrote good verses some of which suggested that he had had an unfortunate love-affair, which I knew to be the case. By profession he was a barrister, but by occupation a practical philanthropist. In the early days of the Charity Organisation Society he was

one of its most earnest supporters, and gave up much of his time and spare cash to its work. He possessed ample private means, but never had much left for himself. His meals were severely frugal, and his dress unnecessarily shabby, except on rare occasions when in the drawing-room or dining-room of people of his own class he looked quite distinguished. He occupied a tumble-down house in a street near Covent Garden, the ground floor of which was devoted to the publication of the first of the Labour organs ; like most of its successors, it was an expensive undertaking to its proprietor. But it was his pet hobby, and he did not mind so long as he could keep it going. Its main object was to find work for the working man, not to set him against his employer. He also devoted himself to befriending men and women of the gone-under world. Among his protégés was a good-looking young man who had formerly held a commission in a cavalry regiment, but when Hill and I knew him was scavenging the pavements round Covent Garden Market. In connection with his duties, he one day swept some of his refuse into the basement area of a public house which stood where a bank stands now at the corner of the Market and Henrietta Street. The publican's cook came out with a broom and struck the scavenger a hefty blow. This resulted in an improvement of their acquaintance and ultimately her accepting his proposal of marriage. She had saved some money, with which they were going to "set-up in business." Hill promised to attend the ceremony as "best man," but he made a mistake in the date, and, as he and I were chatting in his room one evening, the bridegroom appeared. The marriage had taken place that day, and our friend was already a widower ! He told a tragic story of how the bride had collapsed just after the breakfast and died of heart-attack, possibly—but he did not suggest it—due to over-indulgence. "I've lost my old job," he said. But he added cheerily, "I think I know of another."

And some days later I saw him carrying advertisement boards in Oxford Street.

Another of Hill's protégés—in fact, a particular friend—was a young man of county family, a good shot and keen yachtsman, but inclined to be a waster, particularly as regards his female acquaintances. He sought to reform a very common prostitute by marrying her. It was a bold and unnecessary venture, and his father reduced his liberal allowance to two pounds a week. But my friend's matrimonial *faux pas* did not seem to justify breaking off our friendship, so a few days after the honeymoon, which was spent not on the Riviera, but at Southend, I called on them. They were living in one room in a very depressing street off the Hampstead Road. She was dressed in seedy black velvet, and her son, a boy of about eight, of doubtful paternity, wore a suit of the same material, also the worse for wear; he looked like a dilapidated edition of Little Lord Fauntleroy. The table was spread for high tea, consisting of welsh rarebit and two bottles of stout. I declined the invitation to join them at the feast, but consented to be a spectator. When it was finished, and mother and son had consumed much more than their share, I suggested to my friend that we should go for a walk, and the lady was evidently not so pleased as her husband.

When we were in the street I proposed a real meal, and we made for the "Horseshoe," at the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street, one of his favourite resorts. We had got half-way with a couple of steaks when, to my horror, the wife walked into the grill-room, flushed with liquor, and after, in extremely coarse language, chiding her husband for having left her alone, she took him away almost by force. Not long afterwards his father made it worth the lady's while to relinquish all claim to her husband's society. Before they had been separated a month she was charged in

a police court with being drunk and incapable, although, as it transpired, she was quite capable of scratching a constable's face rather badly.

I have seen many people go down in the world, and a few who have with marked success lived down an unfortunate past. A lady relative of mine had a remarkably pretty nurse for her baby, daughter of a highly respectable tradesman. One night the girl disappeared from the house, taking all her belongings with her, and my services were enlisted to trace her. At that time there were sensational stories in the newspapers about men decoying good-looking servant girls in London and taking them to houses of ill-fame on the Continent. With the aid of Ignatius Pollaky, the then famous international detective—that started my acquaintance with him—I traced her, not to any foreign country, but to a boarding-house near Westbourne Grove, where she was living with a man occupying a high position in the Civil Service. She was sent back to her people, and neither my relative or I ever heard of her again until some fifteen years later, when I discovered her, as wife of a man of considerable means and mixing in quite good society; incidentally she was hostess at a big function at which the late King, when Prince of Wales, was present. She died two years ago.

In the early 'nineties, when the novel-reading public was not very fastidious, a story called *Bootles' Baby*, by "John Strange Winter," had a very considerable sale. The lady who adopted the pseudonym was a Mrs. Arthur Stannard, and she was lionised in a certain circle of literary folk. At an evening party the hostess introduced her to Sir Morell Mackenzie, who, being slightly deaf, apologised to the lady for not having heard her name. After she had identified herself he was not much the wiser; he did not read popular novels and had never heard of *Bootles' Baby*. Later on, when conversing with the hostess, he remarked, "I cannot help thinking

that that lady over there to whom you introduced me is not in her right mind. First she told me that she was a man, and then said something about being somebody's baby."

About that time there was a somewhat Bohemian club known as The Salon, the membership of which was composed mainly of literary folk, artists, and journalists of no great distinction, and for the most part of the female persuasion. The club existed for the purpose of holding evening "at homes" in one of the West End picture galleries, to which celebrities of all sorts were—sometimes successfully—invited. In fact, lion-hunting was the salon's *raison-d'être*. One evening after the lady whose guest I was had pointed out and identified several people whom I did not know, I sought further information. "Who is that handsome lady in black, with the diamond star in her hair?" I asked, thinking that she might be the wife of some distinguished writer or Royal Academician. "That is Mrs. ——," my hostess replied. "Her husband's sausages are said to be the best in London."

In an earlier chapter I have told a little story about Dr. Garnett, the eminent British Museum Librarian. At that time few of those who did not know him intimately were aware that he had a younger brother, also in the Museum. At the age of fourteen young Garnett was employed in a position of no importance connected with the butterfly department. When returning some drawer-cases to their places he dropped one of them, with the lamentable result that a number of the occupants were parted from their wings. Thinking to remedy the misfortune, he made an excuse to stay behind after the rest of the staff had left, and he stuck the fallen wings with gum on to the bodies to which he presumed they belonged. Some years later, when he occupied a more responsible position in the Museum, a party of

learned professors of the Berlin University came to London to study our far-famed collections of butterflies. After their return home they published a brochure on the subject, in which particulars were given of sensational discoveries at the British Museum of specimens until then quite unknown to the greatest German authorities on the subject.

## CHAPTER XI

### A FEW PERSONALITIES

FRANKLY, I cannot boast of having ever been on friendly terms with a European monarch, or having been consulted by any British Prime Minister as to his selection of his Cabinet, nor have I got any duchess out of a scrape or advised a Foreign Ambassador how to get his country out of one, but I have met some people worth remembering.

In my other book of reminiscences I wrote about persons and things without notes, and haphazard, just as they came to my mind. Consequently, interesting persons whom I had met were omitted. I now recall some of them. Sir Charles Dilke is not one of this category, because I did not forget him altogether, but now on reading my brief reference to him it seems to have been inadequate. He was not only one of the most brilliantly gifted public men of his time, but a very distinguished and charming personality. On account of his, in those days, very advanced political views he was regarded at one time as a dangerous firebrand, and in many a caricature and political cartoon was represented wearing the Republican Cap of Liberty. It was understood that Gladstone met with considerable opposition from Queen Victoria when he sought to include Dilke in his Cabinet. He was no ordinary party politician or expert parliamentarian ; he cared more for policy than politics. His Socialism would to-day be no more than Liberalism ; and he was an enthusiastic Imperialist. Unquestionably Dilke was destined to be one of the best Prime Ministers in

the history of the country, but he never got beyond the Under-Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs, which he filled with marked distinction. It is safe to assert that no other member of a British Government was, or has been, such a master of so many subjects. He possessed an extraordinarily active brain and retentive memory ; for instance, as an authority on military matters, he sometimes had the advantage, even in technical detail, of men holding high positions in the Army, and he was nearly, if not quite, as well versed in Naval matters.

I recall a Sunday afternoon after lunching at his house in Sloane Street. It was tempestuous weather, which gave me the advantage of monopolising him for more than an hour. At first I was shyly conscious of my intellectual inferiority, but he soon put me at my ease. He seemed to know exactly on what subjects I was specially informed and, however trivial some of them might have appeared to men of his mental calibre, he drew me out on them sometimes to minute details, not so much as a matter of courtesy, but because they were subjects which interested him and were not already included in his encyclopædic store of special and general information.

It is tragic that so brilliant a career should, at its zenith, have had such a disastrous ending, and that a man of his position should have provided the Press with one of the most sordid sensations of the time, and the vulgar-minded with material for ribald jests and songs. Whether the evidence by which Mrs. Crawford's husband obtained his divorce was reliable or not—Dilke asserted his innocence to the end—the vindictiveness with which the “woman in the case” gave him away entitled her to all the opprobrium with which her conduct was judged, particularly by her own sex. He possessed a personal charm which might have proved irresistible to young women of weak character and passionate temperament.

Thus the fall of two great public men in three years—Parnell was the other—was due to a woman, and this has

provided misogynists with a useful, but unconvincing argument. Lady Dilke's implicit belief in her husband was splendid, and in other respects he could not have been more happily married. She was a really clever woman without affecting the "highbrow" or the "blue stocking"; in her public life she was best known as an energetic organiser of Women's Trade Unions. When meeting Mrs. Philip Snowden for the first time I was forcibly, and pleasantly, reminded of Lady Dilke.

In the last of the 'eighties, when I was editing a semi-political paper of ephemeral fame, I had occasion to make the acquaintance of the Hon. George Curzon in connection with an article which he was writing for me. I have never been so impressed—I might say awed—by any man of his age at that time. He seemed an ideal impersonation of the most intellectual and aristocratic Eton-cum-Oxford type of the late Victorian period. With sufficient wit, which I did not possess, I might have forestalled the author of that classic skit in which he rhymed "George Nathaniel Curzon" with "A most superior person." But there was nothing aggressive about that exhalation of intellectual superiority and good breeding. He could not help it any more than a Derby winner can help his pedigree and training. When the interview, which proved satisfactory to both of us, ended, I felt as if I must go forth and confess my sense of inferiority by dropping my "h's," sousing my salad with vinegar, and eating peas off my knife. More than thirty years later, when Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, as Foreign Secretary, was tackling a delicate and critical situation in our relations with France, and Poincaré's propagandists in this country were accusing him (Curzon) of wantonly imperilling them, I had good reason for admiring his tactful diplomacy. Having then recently served with the Inter-Allied Commission of Upper Silesia, I had had rather intimate personal experience of the difficulties which France, our ally, and yet a party



SIR CHARLES DILKE.

*Photo by H. Walter Barnett]*

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to a secret treaty with Poland, had placed in our way in our endeavour to settle the partition of Upper Silesia between Germans and Poles with, so far as possible, justice to both.

As Viceroy of India, he was not altogether popular, probably because he took his responsibilities very seriously and conscientiously. It is doubtful whether any other Viceroy so thoroughly studied the country, its people and its problems. His interest in them was evident up to the time of his death. It was perhaps due to the homage to which he considered the representative of the Emperor of India to be entitled that he was so punctiliously exacting as regards etiquette in connection with his office. There is good authority for the story that, when his first wife's two sisters, the Miss Leiters, were his guests at Simla, they were expected to rise on his entering a room in which they were and to remain standing until he was seated. Although at all times so dignified in his manner, he was very human, large-hearted and unselfish, and his quiet sense of humour could be appreciated only by those who were intimately acquainted with him.

Many stories could be told of Earl Balfour's characteristic sang-froid. "In another place," as they say at Westminster, and in another connection, I told a story, which after a lapse of five years seems worth repeating. When Arthur Balfour was Irish Secretary in the late 'eighties the Irish detective police were much concerned with rumours of plots to assassinate him, and he was closely guarded. At that time I was in Ireland as special correspondent. I was lunching with one of the Constabulary officers at their Dublin barracks, and my host told me that that morning the officers had just finished breakfast when Balfour turned up, dressed in flannels. He had somehow evaded his escort and walked to the barracks to enquire whether there was any officer available for a game of lawn tennis

Subsequently one of the C.I.D. employed in guarding him in London told me that in his determination to avoid their "shadowing" he caused them as much worry as the men from whom they were protecting him. It will be remembered that just before the war there was a gigantic Anti-Home Rule demonstration in Hyde Park. The London Division of the Ulster Volunteers—I was one—paraded for the occasion and marched to Hyde Park to protect the speakers, including Balfour, Carson and other distinguished Unionists, from any hostile movement of the Home Rulers. My detachment was told off to surround Balfour's platform, and it proved very necessary. We had to resist the fierce onslaughts of a lot of rough fanatics, and sometimes it seemed as if they would prove too much for us. But although the platform was swaying and the attackers yelling threats Balfour continued his speech as calmly as if he had been speaking at a Guildhall meeting, and this in spite of the fact that it was the first time that he had ever addressed a big open-air assembly. Last year in Palestine his sang-froid was put to a more severe test when police and troops only just succeeded in protecting him from a mob of Arab fanatics.

Here is another instance of Arthur Balfour's imperturbability, which I may have possibly already related somewhere in print. I got it soon after the occurrence from Fisher, for some years Balfour's devoted private secretary, also M.P. It was the night of a memorable debate in the House of Commons on a vote of censure on the Government, moved by the Irish Party. Balfour was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and it was a very critical situation for him and colleagues; if anyone could save the Government he was the man to do it. When the moment was approaching for him to address the House his friends noticed with consternation that his seat was empty. Fisher went out to search for him and found him in the private room allotted to the Chief

Secretary, stretched out on a sofa and absorbed in a French novel.

Several readers of my first book of reminiscences wrote begging me to satisfy their curiosity as to the identity of "a much advertised lady novelist" whose quaint method of "entertaining" I described. Now I have no longer any compunction on this point. Marie Corelli was a remarkable woman, extraordinarily conceited, and treating all other novelists with supreme contempt, sometimes inventing stories about them and their domestic lives which, strange to say, never brought her before a High Court Judge. Book-reviewers she regarded as her natural enemies, and this kink in her character was shown in some of the provisions of her will. There was no excuse for her bitterness, because her novels had an enormous sale among a certain class of reader. So far as I knew, she never seemed to have a real friend, except the lady who lived with her as companion for many years until her death, and Eric Mackay (whom she described as her "half-brother") author of *The Love-Letters of a Violinist*, and a poet of some distinction. It was rumoured that he more than inspired some of his "sister's" most successful books. Certainly that strangely misanthropic woman's personality never suggested the possession of any great depth of feeling. Her "Corelli" was an invention of her own. She was Caroline Cody, daughter of a poor London labourer, and charitably adopted by Dr. Charles Mackay, a well-known publicist, and his wife. Hence her relationship, such as it was, to Eric Mackay, who was his son.

From the almost ridiculous to the quite sublime. When I was more or less associated with literary folk I had the honour to be included among the acquaintances of Alice Meynell, so aptly described by one of her biographers as "the poet and essayist who walked with God"; no ordinary "highbrow," although deeply cultured, but a very beautiful woman whose presence,

as much as her writing, was an inspiration. A sincere Roman Catholic, her religious feelings were never obtrusive. Unspoilt by, almost unconscious of, her mental superiority and the admiration of friends, readers and professional critics, she was intensely human and sympathetic, always ready to help those who needed it with encouragement or advice, and hers was a wide field of interests. She had the face of an angel, and alas ! a far too frail physique. And what Sunday afternoons those were with her and her husband, Wilfred Meynell, and their charming children in their home in Palace Court, when leading and minor lights of Literature and Art forgathered in the drawing-room which seemed to reflect the personality and tastes of our hostess ! She listened more than talked, but when she joined in the conversation all she said was worth hearing. She possessed an instinctively gracious dignity of manner, yet the sense of humour of a frivolous girl. Almost all her guests whom one first met on those delightful occasions one desired to meet again. There was a bond of affinity in our love of the woman at whose shrine we worshipped. I remember one Sunday evening, coming out of the house by chance with a woman of the world, not of the Meynell atmosphere, and more distinguished for her physical charm than for intellect. As we walked towards the Bayswater Road, talking about our hostess as if she had been some minor deity, my companion suddenly remarked, " I feel somehow as if I must go to church and pray." That was many years ago, before Alice Meynell, broken down in health, retired to the country to end her days. " I am so happy," were, I was told, her last words. Her spirit and soul will live in her works long after we who knew her have crossed the border—possibly, if we deserve it, to meet her on the other side.

Another outstanding writer of that period was Mrs. Craigie, better known by her *nom de plume*, " John

Oliver Hobbes," whose *Emotions and a Moral* struck a note of marked originality and brought her into prominence in 1891. It was much more than a brilliantly clever work of fiction and study of human nature ; in its style, phraseology and dialogue it was literature in its highest sense. And her *Study in Temptations* and her last novel, *Robert of Orange*, although not such sensational achievements, were absorbing. Her several plays were not quite successful from the mere stage point of view, excepting *The Ambassador*, which proved one of George Alexander's most fortunate productions at the St. James's Theatre. By her occasional contributions to the Press John Oliver Hobbes gave dignity to the journalist's profession. I was one of the privileged editors who, in newspaper vernacular, "handled" her copy. Although she possessed no physical beauty there was a peculiar charm in the face which reflected a combination of brilliant brain with depth of soul ; a conversation with her provided not only an intellectual banquet but an attractive picture. Incidentally, she was generally admitted to be one of the best-dressed women in Town, which she seemed to have achieved without effort, or even thought. "Pearl Craigie," as she was known among her intimate friends—and women who only aspired to be—created with no deliberate effort a sort of cult in London Society when it was the latest fashion to take Literature seriously. She was a much sought-after guest in drawing-rooms of distinction, and, had she been socially ambitious, she might have established a salon of her own, almost as famous as those of half a century before her time. But from her young womanhood onwards Pearl Craigie's life was first clouded, then wrecked, by an ill-matched and most unhappy marriage ; one noted a pathetic sadness which contributed to the charm of her personality. Divorce proceedings in 1895 afforded her only partial relief. She died before she had reached middle age from a distressing and incurable ailment.

Mrs. Lynn Linton, wife of the distinguished engraver of Victorian days, was one of the more "popular" school of novelists, and her books were among the quite "best sellers" of the 'eighties and 'nineties; a highly cultured woman, and, without any particular style, she wrote good English. There was no depth, but a wholesome tone, in her stories and characters, and her heroes and heroines were human. Through her scathing attacks on her *bête noire*, "The Girl of the Period," she was unjustly accused of narrow-mindedness. I wonder what she would think of the "freedom" of the present-day girl. Mrs. Lynn Linton was really a large-hearted woman in whom girls who knew her intimately found a sympathetic, motherly friend. I enjoyed several of the delightful literary dinner-parties for which she had the happy knack of selecting and arranging her guests so that they found themselves next to, or near, just those whom they would have chosen themselves.

By the death last year of Lady Constance Lytton, daughter of a famous father, and sister of the present Earl, literary journalism as well as her family and many devoted admirers suffered an irreparable loss. As a book-reviewer and essayist she would have been better known to the public had she not written some of her best work anonymously; I had the honour of publishing some of her earlier contributions to the periodical Press. With none of the affectations of the "highbrow" set of those days, she was intellectually superior to most of the distinguished writers of the past three decades, and she worked for neither fame nor money, but, in convincing and often beautiful language, to give her editors and readers the very best in her power; and she was as noble in character as by birth, a charming personality. When the "Votes for Women" agitation was at its height Constance Lytton threw herself into the cause with such enthusiasm that, regardless of the feelings of some of her truest friends, she was not content

with writing and speaking on the subject. She joined the ranks of the ultra-militant section of the Suffragist party, and resorted to such excesses that she was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, heroically paying the penalty which she had deliberately invited. The ultimate consequence was tragic. Her death, some years later, was doubtless attributable to those months of intense excitement and physical, as well as mental, strain.

Before the "Women's Rights" movement came to be regarded as a subject of practical politics, Elizabeth Blackwell, the first qualified medical woman in this country, and one of the founders of the London School of Medicine, was a splendid example of what a woman could achieve without making a fuss about it. She took no active interest in the feminist movement, except so far as it concerned the higher education of her sex and their ability to compete with men in the profession to which she believed them suitable. She insisted that medical women in their training should not be satisfied, as most of them then were, with book study and lectures, but realise the importance of bedside practice. For some time this doctrine was not popular with the "blue stocking" school of women medical students, but after many of them had put brass plates on their doors and found that they were making little or no progress towards establishing a practice, they realised the value of Dr. Blackwell's ideas. I did not know her personally until she was over seventy years of age, with snow-white hair, but full of mental vigour. She was then living in an old cottage on the Rock at Hastings.

Among the distinguished scholars of my younger days, with whom I was acquainted, was Sir James Redhouse, for many years attached to the Foreign Office as Oriental interpreter. It was at the instigation of a Foreign Secretary that he undertook the monumental work with which his name is, and will be for generations, associated. For fifteen years, in an old-fashioned cottage

at Kilburn, he devoted almost the whole of every day to compiling the first, and still only reliable, Turkish-English dictionary. He used to boast that he had invariably written standing at a high desk and had during the whole time never had a fire in the room in which he worked ; and he proudly asserted that the successful result of his labours was largely due to the encouragement of his devoted wife, the first Lady Redhouse. While he was at work she never interrupted him, except for luncheon and on rare occasions when someone happened to call with whom she knew he would enjoy a few minutes' chat. As a child, I was one of those honoured exceptions, and I recall how he would leave his desk and entertain me with cake and tales of the Orient, which he specially adapted to my age. The wife, whom I knew and loved, predeceased her husband who four years before his death married a daughter of Sir Patrick Colquhoun.

I happen to have been acquainted with three other distinguished lexicographers : Sir William Smith (better known as "Dr." Smith), the friend, or enemy—as the case might be—of every public-schoolboy, and Dr. Liddell and Canon Scott, joint authors of the famous Greek lexicon. The former was Master of Christ Church, and the latter of Balliol College ; two men of more contrary characters were probably never joined in literary partnership. And this reminds me of two temporary officers, brothers or cousins, stationed at Chatham during the War. They were of Greek parentage, and as we found it difficult to remember their names, we called them "Liddell" and "Scott."

Apropos of Orientalists, two years ago I lost one of my best friends, and a delightfully interesting companion, in that remarkable little man—little only in physique—Arthur Diósy, one of the most widely travelled and best informed men I ever knew. Of Hungarian birth, he, as a boy, accompanied his father to England when the



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latter, who had been Secretary to Kossuth, the Hungarian revolutionary, had to fly from his native country to avoid decapitation. In fact, he was executed in effigy after his escape. When the Japanese Legation was first established in London, young Diósy, who by then spoke perfect English, was attached to it as a sort of English Secretary. He soon obtained a mastery of the Japanese language and became an acknowledged authority on Japan, and founded the Japan Society in London. Strange to say—and it is not generally known—he never visited the Far East until he had reached middle age, and then only for about six months. But that was not the only country that interested him. He had travelled in, and studied the Balkan States, Russia, and Poland, and was a regular winter visitor to the South of France and Italy. He was deeply interested in the future of China, and an intimate friend of Sun Yat-Sen in whom he had much more confidence than most Englishmen acquainted with Chinese affairs. He spoke English as an Englishman, Japanese as easily, French and German as correctly as a native, and fluent Italian, and he could converse more or less easily in five other languages. One of those with which he found difficulty was Magyar, his native tongue.

Meeting him one day shortly after my return from Upper Silesia, I greeted him with one of the few phrases which I had acquired in Polish. He replied promptly in that language and so effectively that he had soon got me far out of my depth. Although marvellously well informed on an infinite variety of subjects, his manner was always unassuming, even deferential, and he had an unimposing personality—caricatured more than once by his friend, George Belcher—but if occasion required he could hit out with a very caustic wit. I remember meeting him one night in the smoke-room of a West End hotel ; he was wearing his orders, because he had just come from a Foreign Office reception. A young man,

who was "cutting a dash" at that time in London, and, as Diósy happened to know, was the son of a prosperous butcher, accosted him impudently with: "What the devil are those things?" pointing to the decorations. "I wonder you don't recognise them," Diósy replied, with a twinkle in his eye. "They are some of the ornaments off your father's Christmas beef."

My acquaintance with Oscar Wilde was very slight, and I did not seek to improve it. I was for some years a member of the New Travellers' Club in Piccadilly, a delightful rendezvous of men who had travelled widely. Alas! it came to an untimely end about 1892 through some difficulty with the lease of the premises, since occupied by the Junior Naval and Military. Somehow Wilde, who, owing to his peculiar proclivities, was not eligible for a West End club, managed to get in among the original members. One of the guests whom he brought into the club was a young man regarded as even more undesirable than his host. As a very regular habitué of the club, I was one of those who determined to take collective action, but before the necessary formalities were completed Wilde himself settled the matter by the unpleasant affair between him and Lord Queensberry, in which the latter's son, Lord Alfred Douglas, was concerned. That involved his resignation, and it was the beginning of his end. What transpired in the newspapers compelled the police to take action, and after much delay—attributed at the time to discouragement in high quarters—a prosecution was instituted, which resulted in the incarceration of the famous wit, playwright, and poet, in Reading Gaol.

After Wilde's conviction his writings had little or no market value with his name attached to them until, after his release, he wrote his *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. But it was rumoured that a very clever play which had a successful run at one of the West End theatres, supposed to be by another author, was one of his. Certainly

many of the ideas and passages were distinctly reminiscent of Wilde, and the reputed author had never been credited with such brilliant work. In another case several of the critics of a play produced at another theatre commented on the style and dialogue of the first two acts being remarkably similar to Oscar Wilde's work, and on a marked falling off in the third act. I was at that time writing on theatrical topics for a daily paper, and, suspecting that Wilde had had some share in the authorship, if he had not written the entire play, I made enquiries. My editor instructed his Paris correspondent to "interview" Wilde, then living in Paris, on the subject. Wilde stated that the man who claimed authorship of the piece, the name of which I cannot recall, had offered to buy a play from him with the condition that his (Wilde's) name should not appear. The first act had been delivered and paid for, but on quite reasonable grounds Wilde refused to write the remainder. I wrote to the effect that a play then being performed in London was rumoured to be mostly the work of a distinguished playwright, whose name was not that of the person who was supposed to be the author. The reputed author wrote a disclaimer, threatening that if the allegation was not withdrawn he would take proceedings, but nothing was withdrawn, and we heard no more from him. Incidentally, the Paris correspondent who obtained the information from Wilde accompanied it with a pathetic description of the great poet's miserable condition and surroundings. That was not published until after Wilde's death, a few weeks later.

Among the minor notabilities of the literary world of about thirty years ago F. C. Phillips was a rather interesting personality. In the early 'seventies he resigned his commission in an infantry regiment on account of money difficulties, and shortly afterwards, as "Captain Fairleigh," he brought Sara, the famous originator of the Can-Can dance, from Paris to London, and later on

he was otherwise associated with the stage. Then he got called to the Bar, and at first was not altogether briefless, but he was too unreliable to satisfy his few clients. After dabbling in journalism he suddenly sprang into fame as author of *As in a Looking Glass*, the "best seller" among fiction of its day. There were rumours that he had not actually written the book, but had exploited the work of a certain invalid lady, whom I knew. She had given him a free hand in the disposal of it ; and he sold it to a firm of publishers and paid her somewhere about thirty pounds, hardly a third of the proceeds. Sydney Grundy told me later on that, when he and Phillips collaborated in the play founded on the book, he found that the reputed author was remarkably unfamiliar with the plot. It may have been only a coincidence that, after the death of the lady who was said to have been the actual author of the book, the novels appearing as Phillips' work—and probably really his—were of a far lower standard than that of *As in a Looking Glass*.

Phillips told me a good story against himself, which was probably true. Before the book was published he was convinced that it would prove a big success, and a brilliant idea occurred to him of making money out of it in addition to author's fees. A small semi-private hotel in Paris figured conspicuously in the story, and the name given to it was fictitious. But why should not an existing hotel benefit by the advertisement ? Phillips found just such an hotel, and the proprietor was ready to sell it at a moderate price, but wanted five thousand francs deposit, the balance to be paid on a certain date later. Phillips managed to borrow the two hundred pounds and paid the deposit, but he failed to find the balance by the date fixed. The deposit was sacrificed and the proprietor benefited largely by the advertisement after the book was published. Phillips was always full of schemes, very few of which "came off." Latterly he

resorted to all sorts of means to obtain money. In one case I was his victim. The last few years of his life, no one, except himself, knew how, or where, he lived.

Among the most successful women novelists of comparatively recent years with whom I have been acquainted in the past is Mrs. C. N. Williamson, whose late husband used to collaborate with her. I knew both of them before either had taken to fiction-writing. He was founder and first editor of *Black and White*, a weekly illustrated paper, originally of a very high order, artistically and otherwise. Regardless of expense, it was illustrated by some of the best black-and-white men of the day, all their drawings reproduced by wood engraving. It was too good, and too costly, to last, at any rate in its original form. Just when Williamson was starting his venture and I was editing another, and not quite so distinguished, weekly paper, a very charming young American actress, Alice Livingstone, on a visit to this country, called on me to offer me an article which I readily accepted on its merits. She wanted to leave the stage and try her fortune as a journalist in this country, and she "made good." Shortly afterwards I met her at a reception given by Williamson to celebrate the first issue of *Black and White*, and from my observations then I was, later on, more pleased than surprised to learn that she had married him.

## CHAPTER XII

### MORE PERSONALITIES

ONE of the very few Royalties whom I have met on other than strictly formal terms was the blind Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a cousin of Queen Victoria. Ratzeburg, the German town in which I lived after leaving school, was partly in his province, and while I was there he paid a visit of several hours to my host, Pastor Russwurm, whom I knew affectionately then and for years afterwards as "Uncle Russwurm." The Grand Duke was "grand" only by rank and probably in character. There was nothing of the bombast and aloofness of the Hohenzollern about him, and, but for his language, he might have been an English country gentleman of the best type. In conversation with me he spoke perfect English and seemed deeply interested in my country. Many years later I was introduced to him again, when he was on a visit to Queen Victoria in London, and he readily recalled our previous meeting. By the way, Count von Moltke, nephew of the great Field-Marshal and Chief of the General Staff of the German Army in the early stage of the Great War, was then, as a young lieutenant, an occasional visitor to Ratzeburg, where his sisters were at school, and I made his acquaintance.

I was never acquainted with Gladstone at close quarters. Although not a "Gladstonian" in the party sense, I found much to admire in the "Grand Old Man"; in his most impressive personality, persuasive oratory and his sincerity. Among his enemies were some few who went so far as to invent, or merely repeat, malicious

stories reflecting on his private morality. Quite recently a journalist, much too young to have known anything about Gladstone, except what he may have read, thought fit to repeat these insinuations in a book, as if they had some sort of foundation. If the old stories, which no fair-minded man of the time believed, had any justification it was probably in a slight similarity to Gladstone in the personal appearance of an elderly man who, about 1884, used frequently to be seen prowling about Regent Street in pursuit of young women. I noticed him several times, but, knowing Gladstone well by sight, I never for a moment supposed that he could be mistaken for the man whom he so slightly resembled.

During the later years of Charles Dickens's life I was too young to have an opportunity of meeting him, but, as a small boy, I got to know Mrs. Dickens after she was separated from her husband and when she was living with her sister, Miss Hogarth, in the next house to my home in London.

I was never actually acquainted with John Leech, the famous artist and editor of *Punch*, but at one time we knew one another well by sight. When I was a boy his family and mine occupied adjoining houses on the front of one of the then favourite seaside resorts, and he used to sit on his verandah making "studies" for his *Punch* pictures, which included two of my sisters in the big hats and crinolines of the period.

I knew F. C. Burnand when I was at school, and he a young man writing burlesques for the stage, long before he edited *Punch*. His father was my father's stockbroker, and one of his personal friends. As a humorist he was unfortunately out of date before he retired from his editorial chair. He depended largely on puns, both as a writer and in conversation, and in a style of rather forced, but then popular, humour, exemplified in his "Happy Thoughts." He was a good

friend and host, and I recall some delightful Sundays with him and his charming wife and daughters in their Ramsgate home, where he spent his week-ends when he was at work and lived in retirement afterwards. A few months ago I read with sorrow of his widow's death. Burnand used to ventilate a grievance against my father to me (as if it was my fault) in that he was the victim, just after leaving Eton, of the last operation which my parent performed without anæsthetic, necessitating the patient being strapped down on to the bed. Chloroform came into use very suddenly, and if the operation had been postponed two or three weeks it would have been less unpleasant to young Burnand.

It was my privilege to be acquainted with another of the *Punch* people, George Du Maurier, whose work was the most attractive feature of the paper for many years, and of high artistic merit. As many of us remember, he created new types of characters with the inner life of which he was more intimately acquainted than many artists who have attempted to portray it. He subtly satirised Society's idiosyncrasies of several periods, notably the æsthetic craze, and, with "Mrs. Lionhunter" as a predominant figure, the vulgarity of a type of parvenu host and hostess.

He was no mere caricaturist, but a real artist, whose work was equally well, even better, adapted to more serious purposes than those of a comic paper, and the black-and-white line drawings in his book-illustrations were classics of their kind. Apart from his drawings, his immortal *Trilby* made him famous and showed him to be intensely human. Although he had spent so many of his earlier days in the atmosphere of Bohemian Paris, he was one of the finest type of English gentlemen—too rare in the present day—and a man of splendidly generous disposition, believing that everyone was straight until proved to be absolutely crooked. I first met him when I was Tree's business manager. We were just producing

*Trilby*, and there was some question as to certain rights in the play. Du Maurier was ready to accept our interpretation, but, with Tree's approval, I urged him to consult a lawyer so that his interests might be fully protected. At first he was loth to do so, but eventually asked me to recommend a solicitor for the purpose. It seemed delightfully trusting and ingenuous. I named someone who was an authority on theatrical matters and could be relied on otherwise, with a result quite satisfactory to his new client.

Everyone who had known Du Maurier in his less prosperous days must have been as pleased as he was when *Trilby*, book and play, contributed somewhere about £50,000 to his coffers. It is sad that he should not have lived to see his son, Gerald, honoured by the King as the most successful and popular actor-manager of his day, and beloved not only with the public. But had he done so, he would also, alas! have had to mourn the death of another son who died gallantly in the service of King and Country, not long after he had made his mark as a playwright with *An Englishman's Home*, one of the most brilliant comedy satires of that time.

I have watched the career of another *Punch* artist with particular interest. Lewis Baumer is now almost as regular and necessary a contributor to *Punch* as Du Maurier was, and he, too, excels in satirising the fashions and foibles of the day. Incidentally he has created a new and delightful type of English child, and, later on, girl. Regular readers of *Punch* have observed the gradual development, with affectionate interest in the original, convinced that the artist has taken his types from real life, and suspecting and hoping that she is more to him than a mere model.

I remember well when in my editorial days a youth who called on me to submit some specimens of his

drawings, several of which I accepted ; and I commissioned him to do others. Later on, when William Waldorf Astor, after acquiring the *Pall Mall Gazette*, launched the *Pall Mall Magazine*, one of the finest illustrated monthlies ever published (too good to last), the art editor, who confessed to me that he knew very few artists, asked me to recommend some. I gave him the names of four men, for all of whom he gladly found employment. Lewis Baumer fully justified my recommendation. In his delightfully humorous illustrations to a series of articles by Zangwill he made his mark.

I was fairly well acquainted with another of the *Punch* artists, Phil May, but, as it happened, not one of the little coterie of his "friends" who took advantage of his sometimes lavish generosity. His kind-heartedness was proverbial ; the following is an instance: A struggling young journalist, meeting him one day, mentioned that his only asset at the moment was a recently finished short story which he might, or not, be able to "place." It had already been rejected by two editors. May was not just then able to offer any pecuniary assistance, but told the young man to bring the story to his studio the next day. The author did so ; May read it through, and found it rather better than he had expected, but far from excellent.

An hour later, with the story in his pocket, he called on the editor of an illustrated magazine, who had for some time tried to get him to work for him, but without success, because Phil had not been able to do more than what he had already undertaken. Now May offered to do two illustrations for a short story, with the proviso that he himself should select the story and that the writer should receive a certain—by no means nominal—amount for it, and in ready cash. The editor read the story there and then, and, thankful that it was not so bad as it might have been, accepted it with Phil May's conditions.

Whatever virtues he possessed, abstention from alcohol was not one. I was one day going down to—I think Nottingham, at any rate some Midland city, when I observed Phil May getting into the train. In ordinary circumstances he would have been a genial travelling companion, but, observing that he was in one of his bacchanalian moods, I avoided travelling in the same compartment; I gathered from him that his destination was the same as mine. When I left the train he was not to be seen, and I concluded that he had inadvertently got out at one of the stopping-places. It transpired later that, when a porter was closing the carriage doors before the train left Nottingham, or wherever it was, he saw a human leg protruding from under one of the seats, and dragged out the owner—the eminent black-and-white artist.

Norman Morrow, whose very clever black-and-white drawings are probably well remembered by most readers of the illustrated weeklies of about fifteen years ago, was another out-and-out Bohemian, a thorough Irishman, and a very good fellow. Apart from my occasionally meeting him in connection with his work, he and his brother, Edward, were for some months tenants of a flat close to mine at Hampstead, and I often spent an evening—sometimes the earlier hours of the morning—with them. It was a thoroughly Bohemian place of abode. Drawings were scattered all over the sitting-room, also empty bottles. When in emergencies the Morrows put up some brother Bohemian for the night, one of them would sleep in the bath.

Meeting Norman in the tube railway, I was informed that they had given up the flat and were moving the following morning, with the assistance of a local grocer's pony-cart, which was expected at seven o'clock, being otherwise engaged later in the day. As the brothers were unaccustomed to rising before eleven, they had decided to sit up all night. I was invited to participate in their

vigil, but left them soon after two. Dropping in at a neighbouring hostel for a light lunch next day, I found Norman and his brother with tankards of beer before them. The grocer's cart had not turned up at the appointed time, and the first post had brought them an intimation that the conveyance would not be at their disposal before three o'clock in the afternoon. They were filling in the interval where I found them. I left them there, and the next time I met Norman he told me that in congenial society they had forgotten about the "move" until about six o'clock. They had then gone back to find that the greengrocer's cart and son had been waiting for them since three. It had been agreed that the payment should be so much per hour.

In my time at the Law Courts Sir Edward Marshall-Hall, who has now one of the greatest reputations as an advocate, was a very junior barrister; I remember his father and mother, who were friends of my parents. There are possibly still a few retired dispensing chemists in London who associate his name with the medical, as well as the legal, profession. In about the 'sixties his father, a well-known physician, often prescribed a particular pill of his own concoction, known, although never advertised, as the "Marshall-Hall pill." Had he acted on a suggestion made to him by an enterprising firm of wholesale chemists that they should put it on the market, his son might have been a rich man, apart from his practice in the Courts. Sir Edward's mother was an extraordinarily active woman in both brain and body, and, although Mid-Victorian, an enthusiastic Alpine climber at the age of seventy.

Apropos of the medical profession, there has probably never been a member of it whose face has been so familiar to the general public as the original of the principal figure in Luke Fildes's famous painting, "The Doctor." After being one of the pictures of the year in the Royal

Academy Exhibition about thirty years ago, it was reproduced in print, and has had a phenomenal sale. One meets it in private houses, hotels, country cottages, and inns all over the country, and it seems almost as popular in other lands. I have seen it in France, Germany, and China. A few years ago I found the picture adorning one of the walls of a farmhouse near the Polish frontier in Upper Silesia.

There is something appealingly human in the subject, and, still more, in the attitude and expression of the doctor, who is anxiously studying the face of the sick child on the cottage bed and looking for any sign of hope, while the parents in the background are awaiting his verdict. But probably not one in five thousand of those who have admired the picture have been aware that the painter took a real doctor for his model. In the face and figure the artist has given not only a remarkably life-like portrait, but has depicted exactly the character of his medical adviser, a Dr. Knott, whom I knew well for several years when he had a large practice in the West End. Most unfortunately for his patients, and for many others who valued him as a doctor and admired him as a man, he passed away at a little past middle age.

In my younger days I knew another artist, the reproduction of whose pictures, "Derby Day" and "The Railway Station," have had an almost universal sale. Frith can hardly be classed with Luke Fildes, but few English painters have ever earned more per square foot of his paintings. One of his daughters, wife of a well-known doctor, was a valued member of the staff of a paper which I edited. Her husband, although still a more or less active member of his profession, is best known as Sir George Hastings, for many years president of Ranelagh Club, and now one of the leading authorities on polo.

My acquaintance with musicians of distinction, apart from musical comedy, has been limited. I have always been an enthusiastic lover of music, but I never made much way with the piano, although my teacher was daughter of Madame Dulcken, from whom Queen Victoria learned to play the instrument. But later on, at Rugby, I managed somehow to get first prize for music, Otto Goldschmidt, husband of Jenny Lind (who was then alive) being the examiner. And soon after leaving school I—and, doubtless, no one else—got a certain amount of enjoyment out of a cornet on which I took lessons from the bandmaster of a Danish military band which had been left behind when the formerly Danish town, where I was staying, had been annexed by Prussia after the war of 1864.

The only great operatic singer whom I knew was Margaret Macintyre, formerly known as the "Scottish Nightingale." I recall the sensation which she caused by her first appearance as Marguerite in *Faust* at Covent Garden. Until then one had associated the part, as played in this country, with ladies of, although unquestionable vocal qualifications, sometimes grotesquely inadequate personality. But here was a beautiful young girl who not only sang, but looked and acted the part of the heroine of Goethe's world-famed story. I remember, too, her exquisite performance in *Ivanhoe*, with which D'Oyly Carte inaugurated his management of the Royal English Opera House, since known as the Palace Theatre.

Unfortunately for her devotees here she found as much appreciation on the Continent. Making her home in Germany, until the outbreak of the Great War, Margaret Macintyre was for some years a marked favourite with the most critical audiences of Berlin and other musical centres of Germany. But Germany had no monopoly of her services. She sang, as prima donna, in Grand Opera at La Scala, Milan, and in the Opera Houses of

Petrograd and Moscow, and I read that we shall probably hear her again in London in the near future.

My first acquaintance with Robert Hichens was when, soon after he had left public school, he was a pupil at Anderson's School of Journalism. Anderson, before he started the school, was an important member of the *Daily Telegraph* staff. But Hichens did not need instruction. He was a journalist by instinct, and of the higher order, also a real musician. His critiques of operas and concerts were for some years a distinctive feature of the *World*, then the leading Society paper. His first effort in fiction was, I remember, a short story, which he wasted on a third-rate and short-lived weekly paper called, *Mistress and Maid*. With *The Green Carnation*, a scathing satire on the Oscar Wilde cult, at that time unpleasantly prominent, he made his mark as a novelist in 1894. Needless to say, every novel he has written has been distinguished by evidence of deliberation and painstaking and its high literary standard. While some of his contemporaries have turned out a couple or more novels per annum, Hichens has been content with one in about two years. In spite of his success, and one of the biggest incomes ever earned by a novelist, he has, unlike some others of his craft, never suffered from a "swollen head." He seems to avoid publicity as much as others seek it.

This reference to Robert Hichens reminds me of a remarkable, if not distinguished, woman writer, Irene Osgood, well known through unfortunate domestic affairs, in which on two occasions the Press found good copy. Her first husband was one of the "Silver Kings" of Denver, Colorado. I first met her soon after she came over to this country, unaccompanied, in the early 'nineties with the double purpose of getting a position in English Society and making a reputation here as a novelist, in neither of which was she successful. Mrs. Osgood was nice-looking, inclined to plumpness, always smartly

and immaculately dressed, and a good horsewoman. Amply provided with funds by her husband, who occasionally paid her flying visits, she took a short lease of Lord Lytton's place at Knebworth, and hunted with a local pack. But somehow she was not a *persona grata* in the neighbourhood. After leaving there she wrote a novel, her first, so far as I know, in which she introduced characters taken from real life, and sought to have her revenge on people who had not seen their way to cultivate her acquaintance. Later on she took a hunting-box in the Midlands, and hunted for two seasons with distinguished packs. But there, too, she made no social headway. The code of propriety was not so liberal in hunting society in those days as it is supposed to be now, and she was not so tactful as she might have been in her intimate acquaintances.

I never knew whether Osgood died or their marriage was legally dissolved ; anyway, about ten years after settling in this country, Mrs. Osgood married a retired officer of means, owner of Guilsborough Hall, near Northampton. Not long afterwards he threw himself, or fell, from a window of a West End hotel. His widow had already had a couple of novels and several short stories published, and, thanks more to cleverly engineered publicity than to the quality of her work, the name of Irene Osgood, which she always used as a *nom de plume*, no matter what her actual surname might be, became fairly well known. Now her confessed ambition was to emulate Robert Hichens as a novelist.

One evening, when I was dining with her in Town, she told me that she was shortly starting on a caravan expedition with her private secretary (then Robert Sherard, the well-known author and journalist) through the desert in which Hichens had set the scene of most of *The Garden of Allah*. She intended writing a novel with the same setting, and invited me to join the party,

suggesting that I might be able to assist her ; but I was otherwise engaged. A few months later I received an invitation to be present at the marriage, in Paris, of Mrs. Irene Osgood and Mr. Robert Sherard ; but I was unable to take advantage of it. In due course the desert expedition bore fruit. The novel, the name of which I have forgotten, was published, and had a considerable sale. It was conspicuously better written than any of Irene Osgood's previous efforts. After Mr. and Mrs. Sherard separated, her husband claimed to have written that book. I had suspected him of having had the lion's share of the authorship.

I met Mrs. Sherard only once after her third marriage, but she wrote me twice, inviting me to Guilsborough Hall (of which she had become possessed on her second husband's death), but I did not see my way to accepting her hospitality at that time. The closing years of her life Irene Osgood suffered physically, as I learnt from the last letter she wrote me. She died two years ago, a sick as well as disappointed woman, having, I fear, made more enemies than real friends. The tragic failure of her life was due mainly to indiscretion and quarrelsomeness. She would readily listen to good advice, but very rarely acted on it. It sometimes occurred to me that hers was a two-sided character. I found her, at her best, kind-hearted, sympathetic, and sincere.

During my association with Beerbohm Tree I enjoyed the advantage of often meeting his half-brother, Max Beerbohm, who was then in his twenties, and better known as a writer than a caricaturist. Of the several highly cultured young men of my acquaintance at that time he was the most modest. He was not much of a talker, but, when he had anything to say, he spoke deferentially in a few brief sentences always worth hearing. I think it was he who—referring to a man who at that time rather conspicuously and unjustifiably

claimed to be a great authority on the Arts—remarked that he was the sort of person who would spell “art” with a capital H. He was, and probably is, one of the most brilliant wits of the time, as remote from the ordinary humorist as Chopin from a jazz-music composer. Had he been a “funny man,” he would have been a distinct failure; his witticisms were spontaneous, and were uttered as if he was quite unconscious of their cleverness. Like his friend, Robert Hichens—they were great friends in those days, and I hope are still—he has always hated personal publicity.

There was something very delightful in Max Beerbohm’s affection for his mother and hers for him, and it was quite unobtrusive. Those who knew them well discovered an intellectual as well as a sentimental sympathy between mother and son. Mrs. Beerbohm’s brain was, unanatomically speaking, as large as her heart. She could quite unassumingly contribute to a conversation on almost any subject, and her verbal criticisms of books and plays were marked by a high order of intelligence. She never sought to identify herself with her distinguished son and half-son, having a little coterie of interesting people of her own. Had Mrs. Beerbohm been socially ambitious, and her little house in Hyde Park Terrace a big one, her drawing-room might have been something of a salon. Her friends, as well as her son, found her a very lovable, as well as clever, woman.

Among my varied acquaintances of past years I can include four London police magistrates, whom I knew only on neutral ground. Sir James Vaughan, a friend of my father—his son a boy friend of mine—was for many years Chief Magistrate, therefore officiating at Bow Street. I knew Sir Curtis Bennett, father of the now prominent counsel, long before he was appointed stipendiary. C. K. Francis, who died last year when still in harness in the Westminster Court, was captain of

our cricket eleven in my time at Rugby. During the war I astonished Chester Jones, whom I had known since he was at Cambridge, by appearing before him at Lambeth Police Court in a prosecution which I had to institute as A.P.M.

This reminds me of a conversation I overheard in barracks about that time. An old soldier, who had rejoined for the war, had been describing to a comrade the peculiarities of some of the London police magistrates. "You seem to 'ave been in a lot of trouble, Bill," his friend remarked. "Not I," was the answer. "I worked for a couple of years for a firm as 'ad the contract for cleanin' the police court winders."

By the way, some years ago two stipendiary magistrates had tragic experiences. The brother of one, whom I knew well, was sentenced to penal servitude. The public was not aware of the relationship, as I was. A few years previously a daughter of another stipendiary was brought before her father on a charge of "drunk and disorderly." There was no sign of recognition on either side. The magistrate bound the prisoner over, and requested the court missionary to look after her. Nothing transpired at the time as to the relationship. The daughter had got into disgrace and left home two years previously, and her family had heard nothing of her until the tragic meeting of father and child. I have quite forgotten the sequel. The story was told me in confidence some time after the police court episode by an intimate friend of one of the family, with reason for supposing that I should be particularly interested, which I was.

Among prominent and interesting Members of Parliament whom I have known was Charles Bradlaugh, for some years in the 'seventies a conspicuous figure in the House of Commons and in the Law Courts, where I had occasion to make his acquaintance. As enthusiastic

advocates of "free thought," he and his friend, Annie Besant, were prosecuted for their share in the publication of *Fruits of Philosophy*, a brochure on the sex question. In days when people were less tolerant than they are now it was regarded as scandalously indecent ; now it would be freely discussed in respectable drawing-rooms. He was for over a year engaged in violent disputes in the House of Commons, and in proceedings in the Courts, arising from his refusal to take the prescribed oath after being elected M.P. Bradlaugh was an exceptionally fine orator, with an impressive personality, and it was generally admitted that in his combativeness he was actuated by principle, and that his honesty was unquestionable. After his eleven years' association with Annie Besant, now the high priestess of theosophy, they agreed to differ on a particular point, and separated in 1885. When he had taken his seat in the House of Commons he devoted himself incidentally to the exposure of "jobs" and waste of public money in the public services. In this connection he gave me uninvited and inconvenient publicity in persistently calling attention to a case in which a civil servant of under forty years of age had been retired on a pension. When it had been decided to reduce the number of—some of them almost sinecure—posts in the Law Courts, I had accepted the Treasury's offer of a pension to any of the holders of certain of these appointments who would resign. In consequence of Bradlaugh's action I was recalled to the public service, to fill a vacancy, not at the Law Courts ; but before my very moderate pension could be stopped, I commuted it, having already started on a business undertaking. By the way, the National Debt Commissioners estimated the commutation value on the basis of an expectation of life of only eleven years ! I have already lived forty-six years since that date, so it has proved a far more profitable transaction for the Exchequer than for the pensioner.

I recall some of the most prominent political agitators of the Victorian period. The most impressive and loudest orator of those whom I actually heard was Michael Davitt, who took a prominent part in the Fenian movement, and subsequently served a long term of penal servitude. Before him George Odgers, a shoemaker by trade, and Edward Beale, a barrister, both ardent Reformers and fine orators, distinguished themselves as chief organisers of the great Hyde Park Demonstration in 1866, which demanded an extension of the franchise and resulted in a two days' riot, the calling out of the military, and the breaking down of nearly two miles of Park railings. Beale, president of the Reform League, was pacified by being appointed a County Court Judge! I remember those three great and sincere pioneers of Trades Unionism, Thomas Broadhurst, for some years M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent (a stonemason by trade), Thomas Burt, and George Howell—all of whom sat in Parliament before the days of a Labour Party. I knew Howell personally. Burt's tombstone in the Brompton Cemetery bears the appropriate inscription, "The honour of my country has been the pole-star of my political life." Broadhurst was so highly respected that the mallet and chisel which he used in his occupation are preserved in the House of Commons library.

This reference to agitators reminds me of an incident in Ramsay MacDonald's career when his ideas and methods were more aggressive than now. During my time as Assistant Provost Marshal in England, my area comprised Woolwich, as well as Chatham Garrison. When the Metropolitan Police went on strike one day in 1919 I was ordered to hold a force of Military Police in readiness, in case there should be trouble with the rough element at Woolwich, and particularly to guard the Dockyard.

I did not anticipate the job with any enthusiasm, as I had only a small force at my disposal. To make matters

worse, Ramsay MacDonald, then considered a dangerous agitator, had arranged to hold a meeting on Plumstead Common on that day, and it was evident that he would meet with very active opposition, especially from ex-soldiers, who might be backed by some of the Woolwich troops. There was not a single civil policeman on duty, and all my men, and more, were required in the town. I could only, so far as possible, prevent soldiers from the garrison taking part in the affair, and keep myself informed as to the progress of events, which I did by means of two of my police on bicycles. When I was anxiously awaiting news one of them arrived to report that fighting had started, and that Ramsay MacDonald's supporters were having a bad time. Soon afterwards my other emissary came in to inform me that MacDonald's platform was smashed up and he had fled, and that an Army ambulance detachment was attending to the wounded. At 10 p.m., to my great relief, just when a rough mob was gathering in the town, the Metropolitan police returned to duty, and I left them to clear the streets.

I can include several distinguished clergy among old friends and acquaintances. Dr. ("Freddy") Temple, afterwards Bishop of Exeter and eventually Archbishop of Canterbury, was more than a headmaster to me. Before going to school I lived for a few months with, and was tutored by, the Reverend Edward Henry Bickersteth, that tower of the Low Church party, and, incidentally, author of a once well-known volume of verse, *Yesterday, To-day, and For Ever*. He was for thirty years Vicar of Hampstead, before succeeding Temple as Bishop of Exeter. While at Hampstead he was impoverished by the possession of a family of about twelve, but his sons did well at University and in their various professions. Bickersteth was greatly beloved by his parishioners. I remember that one day he received an envelope containing a Bank of England note for a hundred pounds, with a chit from the anonymous

donor : " From a parishioner ; to oil the wheels of the family coach." And he needed, and well deserved, it.

Some years ago Forbes-Robertson, then an active member of the profession of which he is still the acknowledged leader, told me a good story about George Meredith. One Sunday Robertson was going to lunch with him at his country house on Box Hill, and arranged to leave the train from London at Epsom and walk over the Downs to his destination. When half-way he realised that there was not time to complete the distance on foot, so he stopped an empty fly, and, having ascertained from the driver that he knew Meredith's house, told him to take him there. After they had gone some way, Robertson, thinking that there might be two Merediths in that neighbourhood, enquired from the man as to what Mr. Meredith was by profession. The driver pulled up, took off his hat, scratched his head, and cogitated. Then it occurred to him. "'E makes tit-bits,'" he replied, the popular weekly paper of that name being, presumably, his idea of English literature.

Meredith, although such an eminent man of letters, could, and did, easily adapt himself to the interests and environments of anyone with whom he might be casually conversing. One of my young lady acquaintances had for some time hero-worshipped him from a distance, and was overjoyed to learn that she would probably meet him at a Sunday afternoon party, to which she had been invited. In case she should be introduced to him she prepared some suitable material for a conversation with a distinguished *littérateur*. But when the opportunity came she was overcome with nervousness. After an embarrassing pause, during which Meredith was evidently gauging the mentality of his new acquaintance, he broke the silence with, " Do you like cats ? " After perfunctorily replying in the affirmative she completely " dried up." The situation was relieved by the timely intervention of a vocalist whose

performance no one dared to disturb with conversation. When the once rather distinguished Vagabonds' Club,



A RETROSPECT (1857-1893).

By J. Dimsdale.

of which I was a member until its death, gave a dinner in honour of William Garnett, the world-known Librarian

of the British Museum, I was thankful that I did not sit next him, conscious of not being equal to converse with a man of such culture. As at many public dinners, an entertainment had been arranged for the intervals between the speeches. It included a comic singer whose contribution was marked by a form of humour which seemed quite inappropriate to the occasion. Looking round at our guest of honour, fearing to see an expression of disgust or, at least, boredom on his face, I found it beaming with smiles and the great bibliographer listening with evident delight, and busily making notes on the back of his menu-card. Presumably the stupid vulgarity of the song appealed to him as a refreshing contrast to his day's work at the Museum.

It is interesting, many years after one has left school, to discover in distinguished men of the present day old school-fellows whose career one has not followed. For instance, about a year ago, when attending the dedication of the war memorial at Cheam, I learnt for the first time that the little boy I had known there only as "Hamilton" was now General Sir Ian Hamilton, who was also present. And I have discovered that General Pulteney, one of the Army Commanders in the Great War, was one of my contemporaries at the same school.

I have seen many instances proving that there may be a vast difference between the boy and, when he has grown up, the man. I have unpleasant reminiscences of a certain boy at Rugby, a cruel bully, and a vicious hack at football. I met him again in comparatively recent years, and found a distinguished and earnest scientific soldier, and so religious (?) that he regarded anyone connected with the Stage almost as an outcast.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EAST AND FAR EAST

IN venturing to give experiences of a journey in Ceylon, India, Burma, Malaya, China, and Japan in one chapter, I have to limit myself to a few fugitive impressions and anecdotes, hoping that in doing so I shall not recall the story of a certain millionaire war-profiteer who, having made his "pile," went for a motor-tour on the Continent so as to do the correct thing. After his return he gave a big dinner-party as an opportunity for relating his experiences of the strange countries which he had visited. One of his guests enquired whether he had included Rome in his itinerary. His memory failing him, he sent for his valet. "Harris, did we go to Rome?" he asked. "Yes, sir," the servant replied. "That was the place we drove through in the night."

Perhaps I could fill a book with this particular event of my life, without showing any very marked ignorance of my subject. Although the *raison d'être* of our delightfully memorable journey was to give a series of theatrical performances in the East and Far East, I found plenty of time for learning as much as possible about the countries visited, and I never missed an opportunity, always carrying some instructive reference books with me. For instance, on one of our long railway journeys the only other occupants of my carriage were a Rajah's military secretary and a native officer. He, of course, spoke English fluently, and, finding that I was not resident in India, he sought to impress me with the importance of his State, until I quietly took out my

India Office List (full of information about everything connected with the Government) and, to his horror, turned up his Chief, who, I found, was the second most insignificant Rajah in India, entitled to only one gun as a salute.

There was great variety in our train journeys, which included that marvellous feat of engineering, the railway from Bolan, rising six thousand feet, up to Quetta, with a view at one point of the famous Candahar Road ; the journey from Bombay to Poona through the gorgeous Ghats (recalling in places the wildest of the Scotch Highlands) ; over a day through the Malay jungle (from Singapore to Kula Lumpur), wondering, as we occasionally got a near view of some of its wild tenants, what would happen to us if the train broke down ; nearly two days on the rail through the heart of Shantung (from Tsingtau to Tientsin) ; and, last but not least, that twenty-four hours' journey through the fairyland-scenery of Japan in the cherry-blossom season. Then, too, I did a long rail-journey in China with forty Chinese soldiers on board to protect us from the "White Wolf" gangs which were infesting that part of the country and had recently held up a train and deprived the passengers of any valuables in their possession.

There was a strange contrast between those two river passages : up the wide Hugli, with our pilot anxiously feeling for the treacherously shifting sandbanks, known as "Joseph" and "Mary," terrors to navigators ; and six months later, down the dangerously narrow Pei-ho from Tientsin, twisting like a corkscrew, so that shipmasters jocosely remark that it is all they can do to prevent the vessel's bows running into its stern. At the mouth of the Pei-ho one passes out between the famous Taku Forts, which, have recently been in action.

I stayed at all sorts of hotels, or their equivalent, from the sumptuous Astoria—or is it Astor House?—in Shanghai or the Taj Mahal in Bombay to the humble

“rest-house” at Ipoh (Malay States) or the mud-built, so-called hotel outside the main gate of Tsin-an-fu, the wild capital of Shantung. And there was variety, too, in the many theatres, or their substitutes, in which our company played, including the perfectly appointed Empire of Calcutta, the Municipal Theatre of Hongkong, the hospitable little Kobe Club in Japan, and a Regimental Institute of some up-country station in India. Our difficulties in getting our scenery to some of the places, and, when we got there, in putting it up were often almost overwhelming, but everyone, everywhere, from one of a Governor’s staff to a Tommy, was out to help.

When I landed at Calcutta, two weeks in advance of our company, I found a pleasant surprise. For several years I had been associated with Pélissier and the famous “Follies,” of which Gwennie Mars (doubtless still remembered by many thousands of playgoers) was a brilliant star. She had left the stage to marry a well-known Calcutta engineer, and I found her husband, at 7 a.m., waiting for me with his car on the quay to drive me to their house for breakfast. Their hospitality all that day and evening was fully appreciated, and, apart from that, it was a pleasure to meet Gwennie Mars again. Alas ! less than two years later she died from the effects of the climate. Now the remains of that delightful actress and charming and sincere friend rest in Golder’s Green Crematorium.

I did not wait long for my first acquaintance with the Indian native’s peculiar methods of expressing himself. After breakfast that morning, when out for a motor-drive, we were held up at a railway crossing. The barriers were lowered, but, as there was no sign of a train, my host requested the native pointsman to let us pass. “I would not dare do it, Sahib,” he replied. “If I did I should have a holiday for ever.” As was then explained to me, it is a native custom for an employee periodically to ask for a holiday on any pretext,

seldom expecting any response. A servant of a friend of mine did this three times in one year, on each occasion, as he said, in order to bury his mother! Here is a good instance of the simplicity of the native mentality: I heard the story shortly after the occurrence in Calcutta. At that time the law by which a native can obtain a divorce by application to a magistrate had, I believe, been recently passed. A woman, whose brain was somewhat hazy on the subject, applied to a Calcutta magistrate to be released from her matrimonial tie. When told to give her grounds, she replied, "My husband, Sahib, is not the father of my last child."

Another instance of the native's simplicity: At that time, 1912-13, parts of Calcutta were being rebuilt with remarkable rapidity. A comparatively well-to-do native, having to go up-country for some months, before he left, deposited his savings—nearly a thousand rupees, it was said—in a hole which he secretly dug in a then-open space near the Maidan, the Hyde Park of Calcutta. Unfortunately for him, he had no faith in ordinary banks. When he returned to Calcutta six months later he found a six-floor block of flats built over his little temporary "bank."

This reminds me of one of two serious native riots which I happened to come across in India. Some wily natives of the "educated" class, trading on their more ignorant countrymen's want of confidence—at that time—in our banks, started a business of their own called the "People's Bank of India," with its headquarters at Lahore. It caught on, and in a few months several branches were opened. During my stay in Lahore the bank went broke and its native directors disappeared, with the result that troops had to be called out to quell the mob—probably not all disappointed depositors—which not only wrecked the bank premises, but started setting fire to other buildings.

I was in Calcutta when the first aeroplane ever seen there paid it a visit. The natives treated it with no demonstration beyond that of superstitious awe ; but the army of crows which always infests the Maidan gathered themselves up and, panic-stricken by the weird, bird-like apparition in the air, and shrieking wildly, sought refuge on the house-tops of the city.

I could fill a couple of chapters with my impressions of Rangoon, particularly of the gorgeous Shive Dragôn Pagoda, with its dome covered with pure gold, and that great religion—perhaps the sincerest of all religions—which it represents. Buddhism, with its code and spirit of self-sacrifice, got a grip of me, and has not yet lost its hold. A strange thing happened shortly before my stay at Rangoon. One morning a miserable-looking, emaciated tiger was seen crawling about high up on the sloping dome. He had probably walked many miles in search of food. The children below induced him to come down, and fed him, superstitiously convinced that he had come there, knowing that he would be mercifully treated by Buddhists. According to an old legend, Buddha himself, meeting some hungry tigers in a wood, let them devour him rather than they should starve, thus setting an example of self-sacrifice.

When paying one of my visits to the Pagoda, I was watching a priest sweeping out a shrine. He looked at me for a minute, and then astonished me by remarking, "Sure, you must be surprised to see an Oirishman doing this sort of thing." He told me that he had left his home in Australia to devote the rest of his life to the Buddhist priesthood. In the orange-coloured *lunghi*, and with the bronze-brown skin of his closely shaven head and bare arms and legs, there could have appeared to any European no difference between him and the rest of his brotherhood. Of course he and I struck up an acquaintance, and our first meeting was not our last.

From the sublime to the ridiculous : While I was at

Rangoon Robert Burns's birthday was being celebrated at my hotel, by, I imagined, every Scotchman in Burma. The company had dined, wined, whiskyed, and toasted with unlimited freedom, when, while they were in the hotel *foyer* afterwards, still consuming "pegs," and some of them taking headers off tables on to the marble floor, an elderly half-caste gentleman turned to me, and, with a strange mental confusion of politician and poet remarked, "I had no idea that John Burns was so popular."

Here, while I think of it, I must tell a story which, in view of the present position of the ex-Crown Prince of Germany, is specially interesting. It will be remembered that in 1911 (or 1912) the German Crown Prince paid a visit to India, and that there were rumours over here of his conduct having proved, to put it mildly, disappointing to the Viceroy and others who were responsible for entertaining him. Here is the story, as I heard it, so far as I can recall the details, from an important Indian Government official soon after the occurrence. The climax of a series of indiscretions was reached when the Prince insisted on a young native lady, to whom he had paid marked attention, being invited to his box at a forthcoming very important race-meeting, apparently pleased with the idea of scandalising his host and the European community. His chief aide-de-camp cabled to the Kaiser, who had given him orders to do so in case of any trouble with the Prince. From Berlin a cable was sent to the German Ambassador in London, and the India Office communicated with the Viceroy, who cancelled the race-meeting. Thus the Prince's visit to India terminated very abruptly.

I happened, when in Rangoon, to meet a pretty little Burmese princess, one of the relatives of the last King of Burma, with whom the Crown Prince had cultivated friendly relations, and I possessed a photograph taken of her and the Prince together, and wondered how much

the Kaiser would have paid for the negative, had he known of its existence.

At Bangalore, one of the most popular military stations in India, I observed in the club and elsewhere an unpleasant attitude of certain regiments towards others. One night while I was there the men of a cavalry and an infantry regiment fought *en masse* with fists and sticks for over an hour before they could be separated. Incidentally, here is a story : A certain artillery captain at Bangalore sent a polite note inviting the officers of a cavalry regiment to assist at a charity entertainment which he was arranging. A facetious cavalry captain answered as follows : "The —th Hussars" (his own regiment) "we know, the —th Cavalry" (an Indian regiment) "we know, but who are ye?" The Gunner, equal to the occasion, replied, "With reference to your enquiry, we are Samuel in the wilderness, looking for wild asses, and we have found them."

By the way, in Bangalore we found a good-looking newly married couple touring with a little entertainment of their own. As our company was at the moment seriously depleted on account of two deaths, we were glad when they agreed to join us, both having stage experience. The husband was Reginald Denny, now one of America's greatest film stars.

I saw a variety of racing out there, from the Viceroy's Cup in Calcutta, with all the splendour of the occasion, to camel-racing by wild native levees at Quetta. From the social and picturesque point of view, nothing was more enjoyable than the Hongkong Races ; the course situated in the appropriately named Happy Valley, from which one can look in one direction on to the beautiful harbour and in the other up at the Peak, several hundred feet above. There were no bookies or professional jockeys ; and at that time of year, when the air is fresh and comparatively cool, the European ladies of Hongkong look their very best.

This reminds me of what a good time our womenfolk have in the East and Far East. With good native servants there is no housekeeping to worry about, so that unless she has children—they can safely be left in charge of an *ayah* or *amah*—she has little else to do but enjoy herself. Many of the wives out there have had few opportunities at home of “seeing life,” so they find a delightful novelty in the dinner parties, race meetings, gymkhanas, tennis tournaments, club dances, etc. But in many parts of the East and Far East the women suffer more from the intense and almost continuous heat, even at night, than the men, but they will seldom admit it. I was greatly impressed by the heroism of many a young wife who, although her doctor might have urged her to come home for a time, stuck it out for her husband’s sake. I was calling on a married lady in her bungalow in the Malay States, and was feeling the oppressive, damp heat rather badly. She pretended that it agreed with her, but the worn, weary look on her face told its sad story. A few months later I read the announcement of her death in a newspaper. She had bravely died at her post, poor dear.

We have been reading recently about the Secret Societies of Hongkong. They are nothing new. The less dangerous sort is an equivalent of our trades unions, but more secretive, and very effectual. When I arrived on my first visit to Hongkong the infantry battalion occupying Murray Barracks had recently come in. Their colonel, when taking over, found that his predecessors had been required by one of these societies to employ far more servants in the mess than were necessary, including six for cleaning the mess plate and six for guarding it at night, and he was warned that if he made any reduction some of the plate would probably disappear. He reduced the number of servants, snapped his fingers, and put on a couple of extra sentries outside the mess. The most valuable pieces of plate

were removed during the night, but when he agreed to the society's terms they were mysteriously restored during the following night.

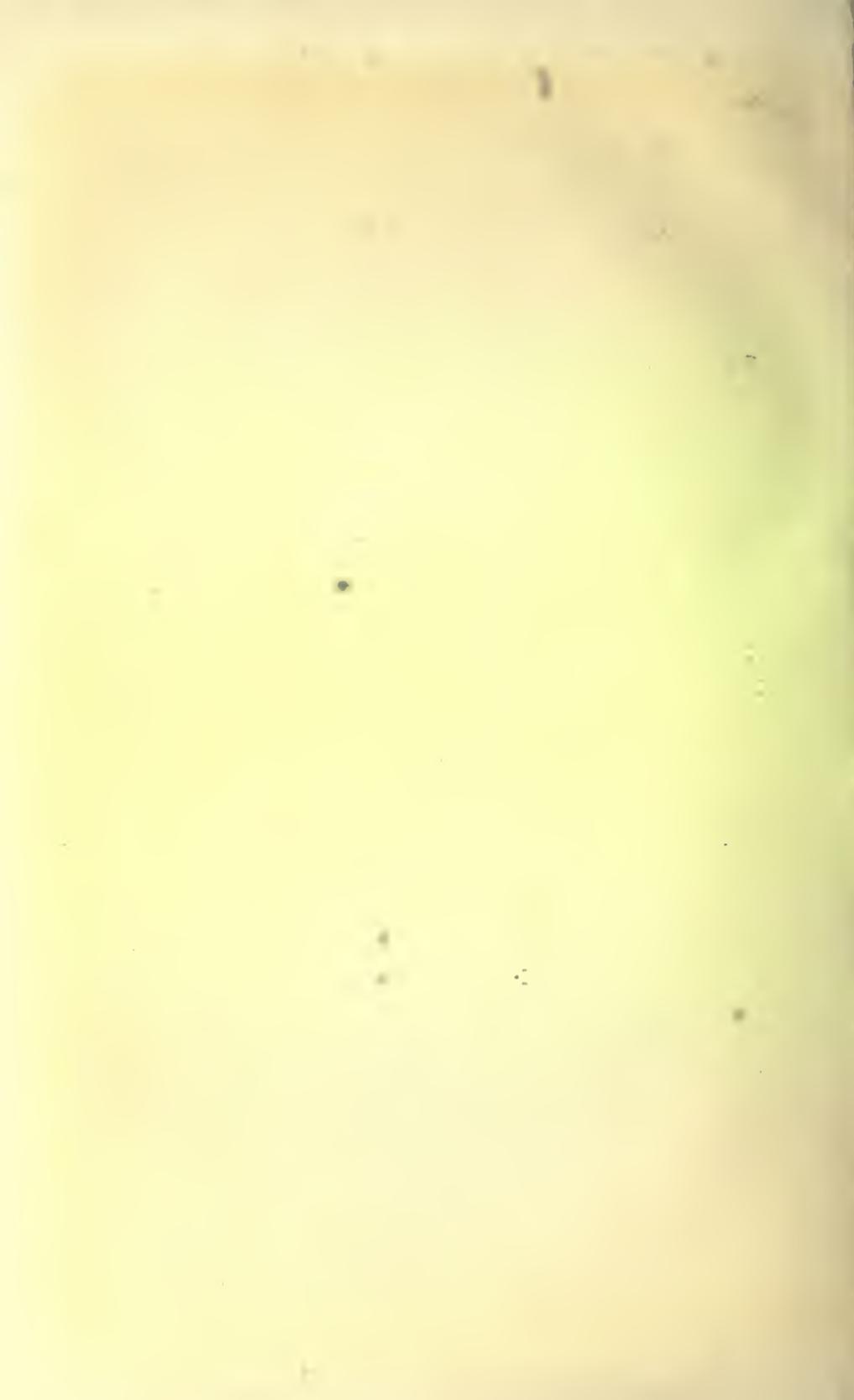
In an emergency the Chinaman can perpetrate a theft just as adroitly as the Indian, but with the latter it is more as a matter of course. At Quetta I was approached by an itinerant pedlar, an evil-looking fellow from the other side of the frontier, with an offer of some suits of pyjamas at a ridiculously moderate price. They were too small for me, and I told him so. My stature happens to be somewhat unusually large. He returned the following day with three other suits, just my size, and of very fine quality, and I bought them. Two days later I found that they had been stolen from the bungalow of an officer who was as big as I was. Obviously the man had selected the place after estimating the size of its owner. The Thieves Market is a recognised institution of Quetta.

Here is a good instance of Chinese enterprise : When I first arrived in India (in 1912) there was only one picture-house in Calcutta (there are now about a dozen), and that was a novelty. Six months later I found in Canton an enormous cinema, said to hold five thousand persons, built and managed by Chinese without any European assistance. Strange to say, up to that time it had been filled only once—for an address delivered by an American missionary who had a great following in that part of China.

Apropos of the missionaries out there, I found much to interest me in their forms of activity. The Americans seem to devote themselves mainly to education, and they have established some splendid colleges for the natives, to one of which, at Tsin-an-fu, I paid a long visit ; the Germans seemed to take as much interest in the commercial possibilities of the country as in its spiritual welfare, while the English missionary combines education with religion. The Chinese are often inclined to



AT TSING-TAU (1912).  
The German Governor's Staff.



take the former more seriously than the latter, and with a definite object. For instance, at Chefoo I was accosted by a Chinaman wearing very dilapidated European dress, with a request in fluent English that I should contribute towards his immediate requirements. Before satisfying his desire I asked him where he had learnt my language. He pointed to an English mission station on the other side of the harbour. "Over there, sir," he said, laughing. "I went there to learn Inglis."

Among the many clubs which I was invited to use, I must admit that, from the æsthetic point of view, the German Club at Rangoon was the most impressive. The building was a fine example of Burmese architecture, and the furniture also Burmese. I have heard since that when the war started the members, supposing that we should appropriate the place, took all the beautiful furniture out into the compound and burnt it. The smallest club which I met with was in Tsingtau. It consisted of one room in the big German hotel, with "English Club" proudly conspicuous on its door. There were eight or nine members—I am not sure which, because one was in arrears with his subscription.

One of the most imposing as well as congenial was the Shanghai Club, distinguished for at least one advantage, in having, as its members believe, the longest bar of any club in the world. A story was told about the Committee of the Tientsin Club—one of the most tastefully appointed and decorated clubs I have ever seen—which, when they were reconstructing it, sent someone to Shanghai to measure the bar of the club there, so as to "go one better." It was said that somehow the emissary, probably thanks to the hospitality of the Shanghai people, got confused in his calculations, with the result that the Tientsin Club bar is shorter than its intended prototype. It must be mentioned that I heard this story in the Shanghai, not the Tientsin, Club.

When I was staying at Tsingtau (as it was then spelt) in North China, that heavily fortified darling of the Kaiser's heart, and was amused at the pomp and arrogance of the German officers, I little thought that a year later we should be at war with Germany, and that British and Japanese troops would make a triumphant entry into the place, and, incidentally (according to what the general officer commanding our troops told me later), be spat at by some of the German officers. But my experience of Germans in general in Kai-Chow was not unpleasant. When leaving Tsingtau about 9 a.m., on what was then a two days' railway journey, for Tientsin, I did not know until just before the train started, when the polite German stationmaster informed me, that I should have no means of obtaining any refreshment between Tsingtau and Pfangste, beyond which the train would not go that night. There was no time to do anything, and I had to look forward to a ten hours' journey without any sort of refreshment. But happily I made the acquaintance of a fellow passenger, a black-bearded German missionary—German missionaries always have beards—and, when I told him of my gastronomic sorrow, he said that the next station, that of a mere village, was his destination, that he lived a few hundred yards away, and, if I could persuade the conductor to keep the train waiting ten minutes, he would get me something to eat. The train conductor—a Chinaman—readily acceded, and was quite grateful for a tip worth in English money about sixpence. My missionary friend, when we reached his station, ran off at ten miles an hour, returning with a long white loaf and two bottles of excellent German beer. I gratefully shook him by the hand, remarking, "I never knew before what good work the German missionaries do in China." And he laughed heartily, expressing his hope that we might meet again some day, which seemed somewhat optimistic.

On arriving at Pfangste at about eight o'clock, expecting to have a "shake-down" somewhere in the station, as there was no hotel there, I found that the German stationmaster, in consequence of a telegram from the Tsingtau stationmaster, had provided me with very comfortable accommodation at the little club, the membership of which consisted of some half-dozen railway officials and two dozen engineers connected with the Pfangste coal-mines which supply the railway. I rewarded him by keeping him up nearly all night talking and drinking lager beer. The following afternoon, on my arrival at Tsin-an-fu, the terminus of the German railway, the German stationmaster there was expecting me, and later on he joined me at the weird building, or rather group of buildings enclosed by high walls, opposite one of the city gates, described as an hotel, and again there was a late night of talk and beer.

Soon after leaving Tsin-an-fu early next morning I was grateful to find that I could get breakfast on the train, and surprised that, although there were only three English passengers, eggs and bacon—I forget how it was spelt—was included in the menu. Opposite me sat a young Chinaman who, judging from his dress, was of the higher class. After consuming some mysterious viands with the aid of chop-sticks, he seemed deeply interested in what I was eating and how I ate it. I had hardly finished when he called the waiter, and apparently ordered him to bring the same as I was eating. It was all I could do to maintain an expression of disinterestedness, as, glancing proudly at me as if to say, "I am not so Chinese as you think," he started on the eggs and bacon with a knife and fork. And a nice mess he made of it, until, after struggling in vain to obtain mastery over the soft egg and hard bacon with implements which he had never used before, he threw the latter on one side, dexterously scooped up the food in both hands, and conveyed it to his mouth. Then, looking at me again, he

laughed merrily, as much as to say, " You see, I did it after all."

On one occasion at least I realised the inconvenience of not knowing any Chinese. It was less than a year after the Revolution when I arrived in China, and a few copies of the proclamation of the new Government, headed by the Republican colours, still remained posted on the walls in the native quarter of Hongkong. I thought I would like to possess a copy, as it was of historical interest, and a friend promised to get me one. The following day I was delighted to get the big poster, with its columns of Chinese characters and brightly coloured flag, which my friend's servant had left at my hotel. Some weeks later, in Shanghai, when I triumphantly showed my treasure to another friend who could read Chinese, he enlightened me with the information that the poster which my Hongkong friend had facetiously palmed off on me as the proclamation was an advertisement of a certain brand of preserved milk which had a large sale among the natives. But even that is a souvenir.

Many of my countrymen out there flatter themselves quite unjustifiably that they can talk Chinese, if not read it. While I was in Hongkong one of these, lunching at the house of a native merchant in Kowloon, insisted on talking to the daughters in (his) Chinese although they could speak English. The father turned to another Englishman, sitting next him, and asked in good English, " Do you happen to know what strange language that is that your friend over there is talking ? " Possibly it was only his little joke.

Of course there is more than one language in China : the official Chinese, another Chinese frequently spoken, Cantonese, and what is known as colloquial Pekinese, also others. In this connection I can tell a story which, I think, has never before appeared in print.

In my other volume of reminiscences I alluded to the Ketteler Gate in Peking, which the Chinese Government

was required to erect as a memorial to Baron von Ketteler, who, when German Minister at Peking, was murdered in the Boxer rising. It bore three inscriptions—in German, Latin, and Chinese, respectively—each purporting to express the humble regret of the Government. I was recently told by an Englishman who has spent many years in China and is an authority on the languages that the Chinese used on the inscription would be intelligible to very few Englishmen, and to fewer Germans, if any. It conveyed quite a different meaning to that of the other two inscriptions—in fact, just the opposite to what the Germans intended; which seems a good example of the Chinese sense of humour. Since the war all three inscriptions have been removed.

In the East and Far East one meets with some interesting communities of Englishmen living apart from the ordinary life of their fellow-countrymen out there. For instance, on the rail journey from Madras to Bangalore anyone who knows Cornwall may imagine himself back there when stopping at Bouringrit Junction, near the Mysore gold-fields, where large numbers of Cornishmen are employed, seeming quite out of their element in such a country.

A more remarkable little colony is that of over a hundred young Englishmen, composing the Canton River Examination Service of the Chinese Customs which are under our control. One evening when I was at Shameen, the island monopolised by the European Settlement opposite Canton City, as I wandered along the bank, convinced that there were few more unpleasant odours in the world than that of the Canton River, I looked at the great isolated square building, the English Customs Club, on the mainland, a few hundred yards across the filthy stream. Then it occurred to me that I knew of no one in Shameen who had gone over to cultivate the acquaintance of their expatriated compatriots. Therefore, oblivious of the risks of venturing on the river after

sundown, I hailed a middle-aged and evil-looking lady paddling a sort of cross between a sampan and a flower-boat. The crew consisted of her and her daughter—the father was probably away at sea on some pirate stunt—and, as I sat under the round straw-covered roof in the stern, I contemplated on the inside of it a German oleograph of our King George and several faded photographs of British naval and military groups, some taken at Hongkong, others at Portsmouth!

Such a visit from the outside world was a very rare occurrence, and the young men gave me a kindly welcome to their unpretentious club, some of them telling me about their life, from which I learnt that several had native wives with whom they lived in Chinese houses, and that many of them, when the "home-leave" came round, spent it in "seeing life" in Hongkong. At this moment it seems more than probable that the Cantonese, now under Bolshevik orders, have taken control of the Customs in that part of the river. If the men of the British Examination Service are still there, they are very much in the danger zone, and difficult to protect.

One occasionally meets rather tragic cases of Englishmen who for some reason or another have got cut off from their fellow-countrymen and are living lives of their own, generally with native wives. One of the most remarkable cases of a European outcast I knew was in Tientsin. An Austrian who had been settled some thirty years in China, speaking the language so fluently that for some time he held a lucrative appointment under the Chinese Government, gave way hopelessly to drink in Tientsin, and when I was there I was told that he had not been seen or heard of for many months; it was supposed that he had thrown himself into the river. But the day before I was leaving, a rickshaw coolie arrived at the local English Mission, bringing the unconscious and emaciated Austrian for medical attention. All possible was done for him, but he died that night. Our police



KETTELER MEMORIAL, PEKING.



instituted enquiries, and it transpired that several years before his fall the man had rendered some valuable service to the Tientsin rickshaw coolies, and, when they had discovered his deplorable state, some of them had, out of gratitude, taken him to live with them as one of themselves, and had given him what little food they could spare, which is characteristic of their race.

On board ship and elsewhere in the course of a tour of the East one picks up some good stories, most of which are true. In the Red Sea I was told about the young artillery subaltern who, while in charge of the detachment of R.G.A. on the island of Perim, applied to his commanding officer at Aden for two months' leave, and was "turned down." It was three weeks before Ascot, and he was desperate. The detachment had just survived one of its periodical, and very regular, inspections, and there was no chance of any further interference for another three months, so the daring young officer signed in blank all forms that might be required during his absence, put off in his boat, signalled to a passing homeward-bound steamer and boarded her. A few days after his arrival in London he had the bad luck to meet his C.O., who had come home, also for Ascot, but not without leave. Needless to say, that was the end of the young officer's military career. The day after I heard this story, when we were coaling at Aden, I was told the more familiar one of the Irish sergeant-major bound for India, who, on seeing the place for the first time, asked its name. "Faith," he said, "if that's Aden, no wonder Adam and Eve left it."

At Tsin-an-fu, the capital of Shantung, the European postmaster related a conversation which he had heard the previous evening. A representative of the Standard Oil Company—which is a great power in the Far East—and an American missionary were chatting over their evening beer in the so-called hotel. The man of oil was talking big about his achievements in China. "What

a pity you cannot devote such energy to our cause," the man of God observed. "But I do," the other insisted. "How is that?" the missionary asked. "I spread the light, don't I?" was the ready answer.

A good story can be told with reference to one of our performances in an up-country station in India. The police sergeant, an Irishman, in charge of the local native police was there on duty. Taking no interest in the Drama, he wiled away the time in the bar, on the look-out for a repetition of trouble in the gallery which had occurred previously. We were playing a very funny farce, and the audience, including a contingent of *baboons*, were laughing uproariously. The sergeant, hearing the noise, exclaimed, "Begorra, the varmints have got to see what I can do." He ran up into the gallery, and interrupted the performance by throwing out a dozen or more of innocent *baboons*.

To anyone with such affectionate reminiscences as mine of a visit to Japan the appalling effect of the earthquake two years ago was peculiarly pathetic. I recall a motor-drive one Sunday, in the height of the blossom season, from Yokohama to Kamakura, then a favourite seaside resort, through Japanese villages, past temples, some elaborately decorated, on roadsides and hillsides. After luncheon at the Kamakura hotel, with a great tree, covered with cherry-blossom in the centre of the room, we crossed the road to see the world-famous Dai-butsu Buddha, a bronze statue cast in 1252 A.D., fifty feet high, with eyes of gold and ornaments of priceless value. Inside the figure was a staircase leading up to the interior of the head, in which, we heard, eight persons had sat down to dinner.

Afterwards we crossed from the mainland by a dam to the island of Enoshima, the popular resort of the Yokohama day-tripper, where hundreds of happy children were playing on the sands. The one street on the island, with its shops displaying all sorts of seaweed devices,

boxes covered with shells and cups bearing the inscription, "A present from Enoshima," was suggestive of Margate ; but Margate has no street with a centuries-old Buddhist temple at the end of it and leading to wooded hills and exquisitely picturesque Japanese gardens. Now Kamakura and its splendid Buddha, as I knew them, are no more ; and I understand that Enoshima was swallowed up by the sea.

In my other book I alluded briefly to the condition of China when I was there. It then, in spite of Sun Yat-Sen and his intrigues, seemed to be settling down under its new President, Yuan Shi-Kai. No more patriotic, sound, and highly respected man could have been chosen. But since, perhaps to some extent because of, his death, China has, as we all know, drifted into a state of chaos, overrun by different generals and their armies contending for supremacy, and, worse still, exploited by Bolshevism. Its only hope at the moment seems in the discovery of some one great patriot, who, whether as Emperor or President, will be strong enough to pull the country together and restore a stable Government ; and to do so, he will require the unanimous support of our country, America, and Germany.

Apropos of foreign influence in China, no one who has travelled in the country and studied our relations with the Chinese can fail to appreciate the splendid work of our Chinese Consular Service and the extraordinarily good judgment with which its personnel are selected and promoted. Many of them are, particularly in recent times, more or less constantly exposed to danger, but all absolutely fearless and surprisingly tactful ; and they get a minimum of recognition in the Press. I could write a long and perhaps interesting chapter on this subject.

In both East and Far East I was particularly impressed by the loyal affection for the Old Country among our people out there, however prosperous and settled they

might be in their state of voluntary expatriation. I long to hear again those three toasts, as they are drunk every week where "Britons Beyond" are gathered together: on Saturday at dinner, "To Sweethearts and Wives"; at the Sunday tiffin, "To the Old Folks at Home"; and at the Sunday dinner, "To Absent Friends." Then, too, there is a note of sentiment in the gun-fire which announces the arrival of the mail from Home.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THEN AND NOW

OF course there have been many remarkable changes in the past fifty years other than those to which I have already alluded. In the 'seventies anyone of the then governing class who had prophesied that fifty years later the Government would be composed entirely of representatives of the masses, even if only for a few months, would have been considered cracked. When I was a small boy a Parliamentary Election was frequently an occasion for rioting, and, at the best, candidates often had to face dead cats and rotten eggs, as well as heckling, and were sometimes protected by hired prize-fighters.

For many years after legislation enabled a man to record his Parliamentary vote without physical inconvenience, the time and energy of both Houses were devoted mostly to debating measures of almost exclusively party interest, and, as I have already observed, the newspapers filled many columns of one issue with voluminous speeches supporting one party or the other. Neither House could be bothered with measures for ameliorating the condition of any particular class of the community if they did not lend themselves to party politics. Who, fifty years ago, when I first interested myself in politics, could have imagined a Prime Minister—Lord Beaconsfield, for instance—taking a personal interest in a Bill for regularising the adoption of children, as Mr. Baldwin has done? At the present time the mere "parliamentarian" (now almost a term of opprobrium) has to take a back seat behind the honest Social Reformer.

One of the most revolutionary and widely beneficial legislative measures in my life was the Local Government Act of 1888, resulting later on in the Borough Councils superseding the old and effete "vestries." The County Councils, apart from other benefits, have systematised and vastly improved free education for children of the working classes, which is now as useful as the very costly education obtainable at almost any of the upper-class public schools, perhaps more thorough. In these schools the progress has not been so marked, but there have been decided improvements since my school-days.

The enormous increase in the output of the best class of publisher, and in the number of periodicals catering for readers of intelligence, shows the result of a higher education. But it is difficult to account for the death of some half-dozen once flourishing magazines of literary repute, such as *Temple Bar* and *Macmillan's*, and of those splendidly illustrated periodicals, the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal*, which in the old days always included three steel engravings by distinguished engravers.

The gradual disappearance of wood-engraving through the intrusion and general adoption of photographic process methods is also regrettable. The wood-engraver's art was almost equal to that of the painter. *Punch* was one of the last periodicals to employ him. It was not until John Swain was no longer able to handle the delicate tools of his craft that his employers depended entirely on process blocks, which, by the way, must have meant a saving of quite a thousand a year to them. The improvement in the literary quality of modern fiction is strongly marked ; but, unfortunately, some of the best modern novelists have devoted their talent to the "sex novel," which could not have been sold, and was not wanted, thirty years ago. Books which no publisher would have touched then are now freely read and discussed.

Nowhere is the effect of the elementary education of the working classes so evident as in the increased number of newspapers and of their circulations. When I first read daily newspapers one of them, I remember, made a great boast of having a circulation of sixty thousand copies ; now about six hundred thousand is the average of a London penny daily. I recently asked a newsagent doing a big trade in one of the London suburbs what papers showed an increase in circulation, and he named five. On my enquiring which were falling off, to account for the rise in the others, he replied, "None, so far as I am concerned." He told me that he had a sale for no less than twelve Sunday papers. I can remember when there were four. To some extent these enormous circulations are, unfortunately, due to the present betting craze, but also to better wages, which enable the working classes of both sexes to buy a paper every day, sometimes twice a day, instead of, as formerly, only on Sunday.

There have lately been marked signs of a lamentable tendency to big advertising concerns obtaining a dangerous influence over the Press, not so serious in what appears in the papers (as a rule easily recognised as "puffs," paid for directly or indirectly) as in what does not appear—that is to say, what is suppressed in the interests of some firm who, on account of their lavish expenditure on newspaper advertisements, are treated with undue respect.

Having been, so to speak, born in the medical profession, I am particularly interested in the progress made in medicine and surgery and in hospitals, both for patients and students. In my father's day many a student got most of his medical practice as a pupil to some practitioner. For instance, he was pupil to a Dr. Davies, in Savile Row, who was physician to some of the Royal Family. Among my father's papers after his death I found what was evidently a bulletin which had been posted up outside Marlborough House during the serious

illness of one of its occupants. Unfortunately I have mislaid it, and, as I have not seen it for many years, I can remember no more than that it referred to either "Her Majesty" or "Her Royal Highness," that it was dated from Marlborough House, and somewhere about 1843, and was in my parent's handwriting, one of the two signatures being that of Dr. Davies. Four small holes, one in each corner, had presumably been made by the pins with which the paper had been attached to a board or door. All I have been able to ascertain is that Queen Adelaide was at that time in possession of Marlborough House, and that there appears to have been no Royal Princess there then, so the bulletin probably related to one of the severe illnesses from which Queen Adelaide suffered in those days. She died in 1849 in her country house at Stanmore.

Royalties apart, I can go back to a few years before "bleeding" gave way to more modern remedies, and I remember the transparent glass jar in which my father's leeches used to disport themselves when not on active duty.

The great expansion of the Post Office and its duties is a wonder of the time. When I was a boy a telegram could be sent only from one of the four telegraph offices in London, or from one of the railway termini. Then the Post Office took over the whole telegraph system throughout the country from a private company which had previously monopolised it. The Post Office Savings Bank was established about the same time, and the Parcel Post came into existence some years later. Now, with money orders, postal orders, the telephone and express messenger services, the payment of Army and Navy pensions, Government annuities, Old Age Pensions, and other formalities connected with National Health Insurance, there seems no limit to the duties of the department which was created only for the conveyance of letters. By the way, I remember when Members of

Parliament had the privilege of "franking" their letters, and the signature of one of them on the envelope took the place of a postage stamp. As many an M.P. did not hesitate to "frank" his relatives' and friends' correspondence the Post Office revenue must have suffered considerably.

My first experience of a telephone was when, early in 1879, I was dining with a friend who had just returned from a trip to America, and he showed me a toy which he had brought with him. He took one end of a line to the top of the staircase, and I, standing in the hall with the receiver to my ear, was interested to discover that a wire could be substituted for a speaking-tube. I met wireless telegraphy for the first time on board a boat which had just had it installed, and it was a thrilling experience. We got into an almost record gale in the Bay of Biscay and for some twenty-four hours we lay unable to make any progress against enormous waves, two of our small boats being badly damaged. During that time our wireless operator took some half-dozen S.O.S. messages from vessels in distress, but it was impossible to do anything for them.

At a luncheon-party shortly before the passing of the Act of 1896 abolished certain restrictions affecting mechanically drawn vehicles, I was interested in a conversation in which the late Sir Ernest Cassel, owner of an important racing-stable, remarked that the motor-car would entirely supersede "horseflesh." "Then what is to become of the poor cats?" Mrs. (now Lady) Tree enquired in a plaintive voice, with her proverbial wit. But cats, so far, have not suffered so much gastronomically as from the physical weight of the vehicles.

Until the arrival of lawn tennis, croquet and archery were the only outdoor games in which ladies joined. Croquet was taken very seriously, particularly by curates, and young women looked strikingly graceful with the bow.

I played my first lawn-tennis game exactly fifty years ago, soon after it had "come in." I am still acquainted with one of my partners on that occasion, and a very handsome girl she was. Polo was imported from India soon after I left school. About that time I was staying in a country house, one of six youths, including four members of the family, and we precociously decided to have a polo match, three aside, knowing nothing more about the game than we had seen in an illustrated paper. The stables produced three ponies, a horse and a couple of cobs. We bought six housemaids' brooms, and, having removed the bristles, found the T-shaped remainder quite useful for driving the ball—when we succeeded in striking it. The first real polo match I saw was at Brighton in 1873: one team was from a Lancer regiment, the other of a club which I suppose was the Monmouthshire, the first polo club in this country.

Hurlingham was devoted to pigeon-shooting. Ranelagh came later on; and men who had never ridden a pony, or even a horse, adopted the little round polo-cap for quite other purposes, particularly for boating! About that time there was a short-lived fashion of wearing white flannel knickerbockers instead of trousers on the Thames, which recalls an incident when I was in Boulter's Lock one Sunday evening. I recognised among other occupants of boats a man well known in Town and always immaculately dressed. He was wearing white flannel knickerbockers, then the "latest thing," and seemed unconscious of the attention which they were attracting. A young "knut" and would-be wit called to him, "I say, who made your breeches?" "Your father," was the ready retort, "and damned badly he made them, too." The inquisitive young man's discomfiture was obvious.

The depreciation of so-called "honours" in the past forty years is deplorable. A few years ago peerages

were conferred, and baronetcies and knighthoods scattered broadcast, with no justifiable excuse unless it was to compensate the recipients for not being gentlemen, or in the case of the knighthood to hold them up to ridicule. It is surely scandalous that a Judge of the High Court should, apart from his official position, rank no higher than some unprincipled adventurer who has, directly or indirectly, paid for his "honour." Some years ago Henry Labouchere, proprietor of *Truth*, and a strenuous advocate of the abolition of the House of Peers, and of all "honours," proposed in his paper that he and a dozen other well-known commoners should prefix "lord" to their proper names. Of course there was no law to prevent their doing so, but he failed to obtain sufficient support.

There has been a conspicuous change in the character and constitution of London clubs since the early 'seventies, when there were half as many in the West End as now. In those days membership of a West End club, except purely political clubs and a few others, required some distinctive social position ; but since then one after another, some of them short-lived, have sprung up for the accommodation of men who forty years ago would have been clubless. By the way, I observe that, principally in newspapers, a new term, "clubman," has come into use, apparently imported from America. It is not included in the vocabulary of men who belong to the best clubs. Most of the hitherto select institutions have had to elasticise their conditions of membership in order to maintain the number necessary. One finds that a man of a type which twenty years ago would not have tried to get into a club of any standing is now a member of one of the best.

Where a father would in the old days have had to put his boy's name down for future election to his club several years in advance, the son can now come up as a candidate in a couple of months. The man who not many

years ago belonged to three or even four West End clubs, must now through loss of income be content with one or two. I have known young men who could boast of not being able to walk three hundred yards in clubland without coming to a club of which he was a member. And the receipts, apart from the annual subscriptions, have fallen off largely. The old habit of bachelors dining regularly in their clubs is by no means so prevalent as before, owing to the more attractive inducements of the restaurants ; and those who use the club more or less regularly do not consume nearly so much wine or spirits as they would have done twenty years ago. At this moment many committees are anxiously striving to keep pace with expenditure. How different from the big, invested funds of the old-fashioned clubs ! And who could have believed twenty years ago that the Guards' Club would have to move from its distinguished position in Pall Mall to less highly rented premises on the North side of Piccadilly ; or that almost every one of the old clubs would be driven to admit lady guests in order to compete with restaurants ? But all this is only one of the signs of the times.

It was at least a year after I first smoked that cigarettes "came in," and longer still before they were generally obtainable. Many cigar-dealers feared that they would spoil the sale of cigars. An elderly Frenchman, named Pontet—he seemed always to have chilblains on his fingers—who sold some of the finest snuff and cigars in an old-fashioned shop close to the Haymarket Theatre, held out until 1895. I was then one of his regular customers for tobacco, and after much difficulty I persuaded him to add cigarettes to his stock. He professed not to know where to obtain any, but one day when I called he produced secretly from under the counter two packets of "Richmond Gems," which I was convinced he had purchased at retail price from

another tobacconist. Two or three weeks afterwards he was found dead in his shop.

Were I taking the subjects of this chapter according to plan, instead of as they occur to me, that of the physical difference between women of the Victorian Period and those of to-day would have had preferential treatment. Although reminiscently loyal to the girls of my youth, I can judge this question without prejudice. One might come to the conclusion that the upper and middle-class girl of to-day is, as regards her physiognomy, much better looking than her equivalent of my young days, but a liberal allowance must be made for her having reduced "make-up" to a fine art. Sometimes one can hardly believe that the exquisitely delicate bloom on her cheeks is not natural.

The beauty of the Mid-Victorian girl was not an artificial and expensive product. She was content with what Nature had given her, and was justified. But perhaps she was not unconscious of the value of a judiciously chosen colour for her frock, or the effect of a red or rose-coloured parasol when it was in fashion. With all this strenuousness of the modern girl's recreation and her life in general, particularly her night life and its dancing, and the hectic craving for excitement, it may be necessary to resort to some artificial means of concealing the effects.

The girl of my young days took her pleasures without all this effort ; her life was more reposeful, and her mind less strained. Give the modern girl's face a good scrubbing with soap and warm water, and, I fancy, the girls whom I remember would, if we could see them, have the best of it. One suspected the recent fashion of baring the back to the waist of being, in many cases, a means of diverting attention from the face, in others of a more reprehensible purpose. The Mid-Victorian young woman, who displayed more of the front of her figure than her equivalent of to-day does, would have been horrified by

the thought of the state of semi-nudity in which "Miss 1925" indulged. As regards the rest of her, the abolition of the corset has given the modern girl an advantage. Her figure is generally her own, and the dress is designed to show it off; but presumably the very graceful willowy-pattern form of to-day is in many cases produced by some special and, to me, mysterious, method of treatment.

Then there is the more robust type, the product of games in which her grandmother, or even mother, did not indulge. Her limbs are well set, and she walks with a firm step and a swing of the body characteristic of her spirit of independence. But here there seems a tendency to excess, and what might prove to the advantage of the future race may have the opposite effect.

By the way, I read that French artists are deplored the scarcity, almost disappearance, of the naturally shaped female model, finding the modern scraggy, or, on the other hand, unnaturally developed, figure quite unsuitable for pictures from the nude.

The exaggerated development of the muscles of the arms and of the hands, by which they suggest masculinity, is far from attractive, and one is disposed to an unfavourable comparison between the size of some of the girls' hands of to-day and the dainty shapeliness of those of the girls I used to admire. "Miss 1870," or even "Miss 1890," did not find it necessary to be constantly playing about with manicure implements and to train her finger-nails to such long points that they resemble a Chinaman's. Excepting on the stage, we men were not privileged to see the lower limbs—now frankly alluded to as "legs"—of the Mid-Victorian girl, so that it is not possible to make a comparison, but those of "Miss 1926," so well proportioned and generously displayed, would take a lot of beating. In comparing the present with the past nothing seems more agreeably conspicuous than the way in which the woman of forty, or thereabouts, has retained much of the youthfulness

of not only figure and face, but of disposition. One could as easily fall in love with one of them as one might have done in the past with a girl of twenty.

There is, or should be, no connection between women and crime. But it happens to occur to me at the moment that, although crime has shown a considerable decrease—several prisons have been closed lately—we have now a more desperate class of criminal, who does his work on far more ambitious lines ; the motor-car lends itself to his exploits and escape, and firearms are used as they never were before. It is a debatable question of criminology whether the punishment for serious crimes is sufficiently severe in these days. “Transportation for life” was still the extreme penalty, short of hanging, when I was a boy.

Many years ago I heard the history of a remarkable case from a prison official. A young man of good family got mixed up in a midnight brawl in one of the old disreputable cafés in the Haymarket and killed another man. He was convicted of manslaughter, and was one of the last batch of convicts to be transported to Australia. By good conduct he did not have to wait long for his ticket-of-leave, and he joined the then new Melbourne Police. In a few years he rose to be its Chief Constable, and was sent back to England to study London police methods. Happening, the night before he was to sail back to Australia, to be in the Haymarket, he, probably from morbid curiosity, looked in at the café where he had killed the man some twelve years previously. By an unfortunate coincidence he again got involved in a row, and injured an opponent so seriously that he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. I could never ascertain what happened to him afterwards.

I knew the Metropolitan Police when there were only four thousand of them, all wearing tall hats, and most with beards. Now there are twenty thousand, including

several hundred mounted on horses which would excite the envy of a cavalry regiment. Until the late 'eighties the police made no secret of possessing truncheons, carrying them in leather cases attached to their belts. I remember that, when dangerous Socialist disturbances were of almost daily occurrence in the West End, W. T. Stead, then a socialist, protested in his *Pall Mall Gazette* (which sympathised with the mob) against the police being armed with, and using, truncheons. A week later he announced triumphantly that he had succeeded in getting them abolished. He did not know that the very useful weapon had merely been transferred to a long pocket inside the trouser-leg, as a precaution against the police being easily disarmed by the mob.

The first London detective whom I knew (in connection with a theft from, not by, me) was one of only some four dozen. They had no organisation of their own, and at that time many criminals were run to earth with the aid of ordinary civilians who devoted themselves to hunting them down, particularly to the capture of pickpockets, with a view to any reward that might be forthcoming. Now the almost perfectly trained and organised C.I.D. has a strength of six hundred, and is provided with arms and motor-cars. A very important innovation in our detective system is in the Special Branch of the C.I.D.

The S.B., formed about 1888 to combat an epidemic of outrages by the most dangerous element of the Irish Nationalists, is now a permanent organisation for dealing with so-called political offences, such as the Anarchist activities of twenty-five years ago, the Bolshevik propaganda of to-day, and the inquisitiveness of foreign "agents." In the Great War the S.B., under Sir Basil Thomson, gave valuable aid to our Naval and Military Intelligence Services. Incidentally, it is responsible for the safety of the King and Queen and foreign Royalties visiting this country.

It is interesting to look back at the changes in the Army since I first knew it. When I was a boy the "Purchase System," by which officers bought or sold their commissions, was abolished. In those days the Army was the soldier's profession, as it is the officer's. He did not soldier as a stop-gap, but served at least twenty years; and most of the sergeants were grey-headed. There was no system of "linked" battalions of infantry (two battalions to a regiment) as now. With a very few exceptions, every battalion was a regiment, with a distinctive number, not a territorial designation, and the number was shown conspicuously on the uniform. I used to hear about the ill-feeling in the officers' messes and in the barrack-rooms when first a battalion discovered that it was in the same regiment with another battalion with which it had never been associated, and never wanted to be.

I remember the shako and its being supplanted by the pre-war helmet, a bad copy of the German head-dress; also the Enfield, which was loaded with a ramrod thrust down the muzzle, and the old smooth-bore artillery gun from which I myself fired cannon balls at the time when most of the old weapons had already been converted into rifled guns by what was known as the Palliser system. I knew Sir William Palliser (the inventor) and his family for several years before he died.

I find that few officers, serving or retired, of the present day know that at one time, and for only a little over a year, Sandhurst had no cadets. The college was composed of young officers, who, on passing the examination, received a sub-lieutenant's commission and wore the officer's (now obsolete) patrol jacket. But the experiment was a failure. Another experiment, which only the War Office regarded as a failure, was that very useful and sensible field-service cap supplied to all troops before the South African War. The German Emperor—

the present ex-Kaiser—thought so highly of it, a German officer told me, that he ordered several hundred caps to be made from the pattern, to try them in his own army. He had decided to adopt it when he heard that we had abolished it, and he was too proud to use anything which our War Office did not think good enough for the British Army.

One of the wisest of the many abolitions was that of the time-honoured custom of special officers carrying the Colours into action. It was very glorious and inspiring, but often meant unnecessary loss of life. The last occasion on which it was observed was, I think, at the Battle of Maiwand in the last Afghan War, when, carrying the Colours of the old 66th (now the Manchester) Regiment, Lieutenant Outram Barr, whom I knew as [a boy in his home in Sussex, lost his life. Now the ensign is no longer an officers' rank; and the Colour-sergeant has more to do with pay than Colours.

Since 1914 modern warfare has been revolutionised, involving such drastic changes in the British Army that it is hardly recognisable. The sword will soon be little more than a symbol or an ornament, the old "thin red line" but a reminiscence; and the horse, whether for artillery or transport, is almost completely supplanted by machines. In the many changes there seems, alas! a decided tendency to ignore regimental tradition and sentiment. We have seen it in the merging of two cavalry regiments of different traditions into one, and now it is proposed—and may be *fait accompli* before this book is published—to abolish regimental depôts.

This reminds me of an experience of my own during the war. My detachment of military police at Sittingbourne had a lot of trouble with some men of a battalion of Wiltshires stationed there. Our always resourceful sergeant-major suspected that the nightly disturbances

were due to some form of discontent, and had a chat with one of the men. He found that all those concerned were Irishmen who, obviously by some War Office blunder, had been transferred from an Irish unit. "It's this, sorr," the man explained, "We'll foight for Oireland, and we don't moind foighting for England, but divil a bit will we foight for Wiltshire, because we don't know where the contry is."

## CHAPTER XV

### INCIDENTS IN KHAKI

I LOOK back to being taken, at nearly sixty years of age, (on the 20th August, 1914) before an elderly officer by a smart recruiting sergeant in the musty old recruiting office outside Chatham Barracks, and lying largely about my age. I remember wondering, as I was marched across the barrack square up to the Casualty Hospital, whether jumping over chairs would be included in the medical tests. Ten months later, after getting my commission, serving as captain with two different infantry battalions, and returning to Chatham to take up my appointment of Assistant Provost Marshal of the Thames and Medway Garrison, when I was crossing the same barrack square I was saluted by my old friend, the recruiting sergeant, who was taking a party of recruits to the Casualty Hospital for examination. After they had passed me, I heard him encourage them with : " Did you see him ? He was one of my recruits. That's what you can come to, if you try." A worse fate than that was probably in store for some of them, poor fellows.

In my other volume I incidentally conveyed some idea of the variety of my duties during my time at Chatham. There seemed no limit to them, and not only as A.P.M., but as, in addition, Acting Garrison Adjutant (for eighteen months) and temporary Garrison Fire-master responsible for all fire appliances (for several months). Seeing that the Thames and Medway Garrison —with an average of some 50,000 troops at that time and

its great strategic importance and elaborate defences, as well as being a naval station with a big dockyard—would have been invaluable hunting-ground for spies and sabotagers, the A.P.M. and military police had special duties, also others connected with the Defence of the Realm Regulations. And the Thames and Medway did not monopolise its A.P.M., as his area also included the Woolwich Garrison.

Day and night I had to be within call in case of emergency, great or small. There was no escape from the telephone. Apart from an instrument in my office, another in my quarters, and a third in the mess, wherever I went I had to keep myself in touch with my headquarters, with which each of my military police outlying detachments, from Sittingbourne up to Woolwich, was connected. However, in spite of my white hairs, I never tired of the job. The more exacting I found it the more I congratulated myself on having got it—a matter of temperament, certainly not virtue. And I had the advantage of a body of extraordinarily competent and enthusiastic assistants, from D.A.P.M.'s, Sergeant-Major and chief clerk, down to lance-corporals and typists. Above all, the General and the officers of the Garrison Headquarters Staff gave me all possible support.

Happily there were innumerable incidents to appeal to a sense of the ridiculous, and thus relieve the strain. The first of the two A.P.M.'s under whom I served before I got my commission, Captain Miers (to whose memory I dedicated my other volume), possessed a delightful sense of humour, which he occasionally vented on his subordinates. After reading one of my morning reports on my previous night's work, in which I referred to having shadowed a particular suspect, he enquired, "What were you supposed to be doing at that hour?" "Walking out, sir," I replied. "Ah!" he said, glancing at my white hair, "that accounts for our housemaid calling us so late this morning."

By the way, at that time, when, as a private, I was attached to the military police on "special duty," and in plain clothes, some of the people I met had no idea of my military rank. One of them, a naval officer, invited me to a luncheon-party on board his ship. I ought not to have accepted, but could not resist. When I sat next the charming wife of a very superior military officer and she gave me an invitation to tea at her house, I did not know whether to shudder or chuckle as I realised the impudence of my breach of discipline.

For a long time after I was appointed A.P.M. I was kept busy investigating utterly groundless charges against innocent persons for "spying." For instance, an elderly man of ragged appearance was marched into my office by a couple of soldiers. He had been handed over to them by a special constable, with a note scrawled on the back of an envelope: "This man is a spy. I found him acting suspiciously." The local detective inspector happened to come in just then, and recognised the prisoner as a well-known and harmless lunatic. I made enquiries about the special constable who proved also to be of weak mentality.

In another case my attention was drawn to an old woman, known locally as "Catchy Roupell," who lived in a corrugated iron hut in a lonely position which commanded a view across the Medway. It was said that she was the widow of a German, and was signalling seawards at night. At an hour when I had ascertained that she was usually away from home one of my sergeants and I entered the house through a window and searched it. The only papers in the place were great stacks of old copies of *Tit Bits*, which were apparently her only means of intellectual recreation, and the only means of night-signalling was a tiny oil-lamp with a broken chimney, that served as the sole illumination of the one room of which the hut consisted. Subsequently I found that no trace of any connection between her and Germany

existed, and that, with a very small income, she preferred to live the life of a recluse.

In the very early days of the war there was a comic little spy-scare in which I was interested. A letter appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, signed with a very ordinary surname, and emanating from the Isle of Sheppey. It referred at length to a very rare bird which the writer had discovered on the island. A zealous intelligence officer suspected the letter of being the means of conveying some secret message, the name of the bird given not being found in any reference book available at the moment. Searching enquiries were instituted, with the result that the writer was identified—an innocent person living obscurely on the island, and an enthusiastic ornithologist.

One night the officer in charge of a group of observation posts in the Isle of Sheppey, from which it would have been easy to signal out to sea, telephoned to our headquarters that the flashing of a lamp had been distinctly observed on the cliff. He was instructed to investigate and report further, and we awaited the result with considerable interest. In due course came the message :

“With reference to my message No. —, Post No. — reports cycle patrol sent out reports visited house on spot where light seen, and occupant, an elderly gentleman named —, reports that an hour ago he took out his pocket-lamp to look for his collar-stud, which he thought he had dropped in the garden, and found it.”

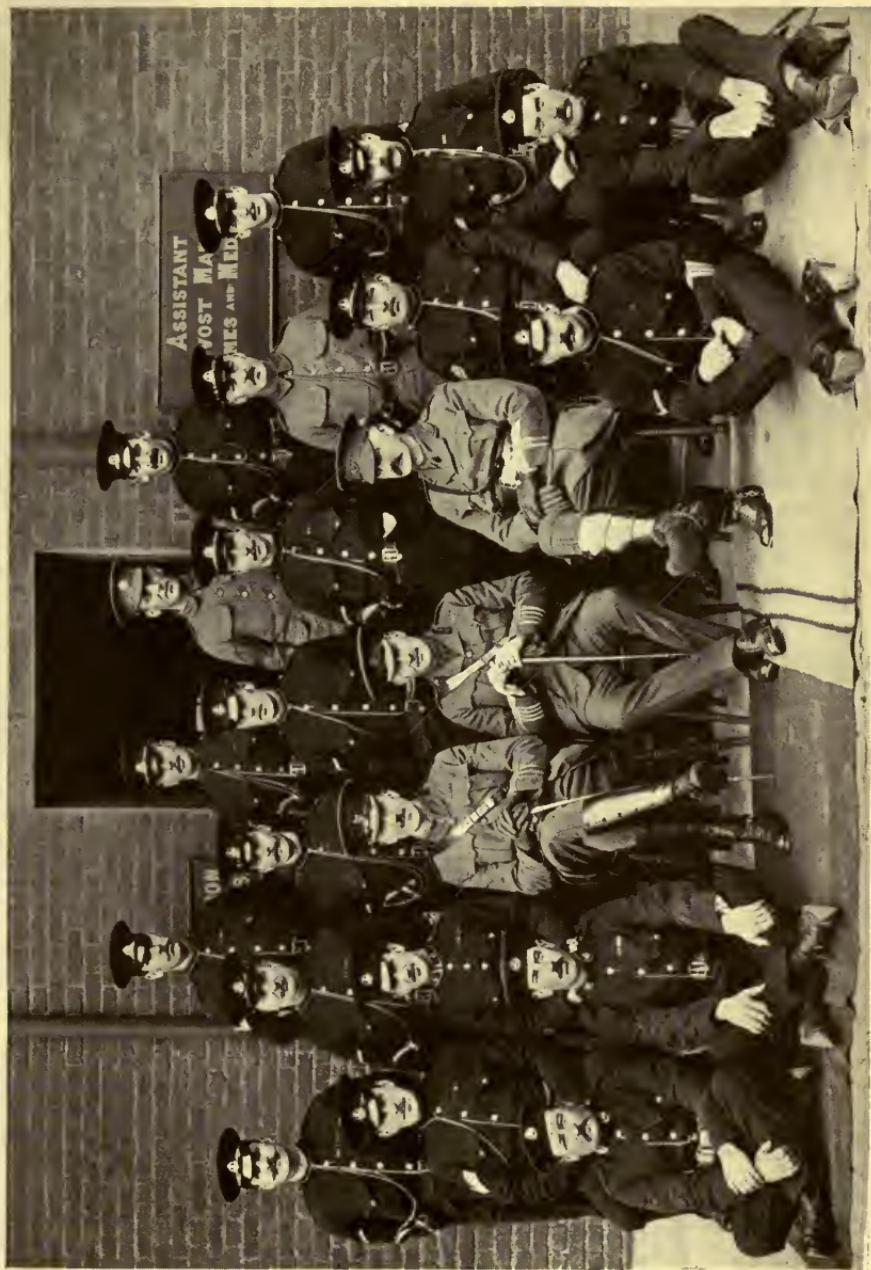
Even in London, so far from the Coast, the military authorities were persecuted by reports of signalling from windows, which, had it existed, could not have served any useful purpose. At one time a friend of mine, a resourceful young staff officer, had to deal with all these stories, and, having a sense of humour, he concocted an elaborate form of questions, each of which the person making the report had to answer. An old lady living

at Holloway wrote on some half-dozen sheets of paper a long, rambling story of how she had seen signalling at night from windows of no less than seven different houses. Seven forms were sent her, with a request that she should fill them in. However, she was not discouraged. They were returned, but with no single question answered categorically, the old incoherent story being repeated right across the seven pages ; and on a separate sheet of paper was written, " Since I wrote you I have found four more houses signalling. Please send me four more of your papers."

All railway tunnels in and near Chatham were guarded by sentries. Several of those posted on, and in, the Gillingham tunnel had reported having heard a suspicious tapping overhead and that it appeared to start regularly at 7 a.m. It was considered so alarming that in my investigations I was accompanied by a General Officer. An idea occurred to me, and I started my job, not in the tunnel, but in a street under which it ran ; and exactly above the spot indicated I discovered a cobbler's shop ; experiments showed that the sound of the shoemaker's hammer penetrated downwards through the forty feet of chalk, which is a remarkably good conductor of sound.

Among my various duties I had to satisfy the Garrison Commander as to the identity of all tenants of railway arches, who mostly used them for the purpose of stores, garages, or stables. Any of these places might have been useful for blowing up the railway line and cutting off the means of troops being hurriedly conveyed to the coast in case of invasion.

One of them was regarded with suspicion. The front of the arch was very substantially walled, and a large and thick door had two formidable-looking locks. Men quite unknown in the neighbourhood had been seen going in and out, always locking the door behind them. I was told that the place was occupied when I arrived,



MILITARY POLICE.

With the A.A. and Q.M.G., the D.A. and Q.M.G. and the A.P.M. (the Author), Thames and Medway Garrison, in the early days of the War. This was the nucleus of a local force of over a hundred Military Police.

*Photo by Bassano*



but I knocked in vain for several minutes. Eventually a man of somewhat superior appearance opened it half-way and asked what I wanted. When I told him he admitted me, but requested that I should leave the two military policemen who accompanied me outside. I was astonished to find several men at work with chemical appliances, as to the character of which I was quite ignorant, and flames were coming out of the mouth of a furnace sunk in the ground. Then I was told in strict confidence that the place was used for some very secret and important experiments on behalf of a certain department of the War Office. I, of course, abstained from asking any questions as to the exact nature of them when papers were shown me which confirmed the story.

At one time those strange persons describing themselves as "conscientious objectors" gave a good deal of trouble at Chatham. Sometimes I had a batch of them in Detention Quarters (otherwise a miniature prison) under my charge. Only one of them changed his mind. After some persuasion I permitted his mother to visit him, and, to my surprise, instead of sympathising with her son, she gave him such a "dressing down" that he was converted before she left.

Although the Navy and Army are two such very distinct services, and there is very little intercourse between bluejackets and Tommies, the men of the Navy at Chatham had strong views about the military "conchies." A party of the latter in Chatham Barracks were given permission to go to London to appeal in person to some tribunal appointed to hear their grievances (?). Precautions were taken to prevent their being molested by other soldiers, but as they got out of barracks some dozen bluejackets were waiting for them with bags of flour, which they emptied on the way to the railway station. But that was not all. Another Naval contingent had bought railway tickets, and they travelled in the same compartments with the "cold-feeters" half-way

to London. When they left their victims the latter, from accounts received afterwards, had had a very rough time.

Sometimes my duties involved dealing with troublesome members of the opposite sex. In Woolwich there was a set of rather disorderly young women known locally as "Banana Girls," because they were employed at the fruit-stalls in the Market Square, although their wares were not limited to bananas. At night they would deck themselves out in their finery and wait as near the Artillery Barracks as they dared, to make the acquaintance of young officers leaving the mess. I took them by surprise one night, and cautioned them before dispersing the gathering.

A few nights later, when I was standing outside the Woolwich railway station before the last train left for Chatham, a girl came up and enquired of me whether I was the A.P.M. On receiving a satisfactory reply, she said, "If you please, sir, I wanted to tell you that I ain't no Banana Girl. They call me one because I sells bananas sometimes, but I don't have nothing to do with them girls as you spoke to up at the barracks that night." I assured her that I gladly accepted her statement; and, wishing me good night, she shook me warmly by the hand.

By the way, here is a rather interesting romance. Attached to the A.S.C. at Woolwich (included in my sphere of provost work) was a very attractive-looking lady-chauffeur who drove the officers' duty car. A young officer who had come over from Australia to "do his bit," and had just come out of hospital and reported for duty with the A.S.C. at Woolwich, was interested in a conversation about her in the mess. It was remarked that she had always avoided cultivating the acquaintance of any of the officers who used her car, and seemed absolutely man-proof. The following morning he had to visit an outlying detachment of the

A.S.C., and, when the car came up to the door of the mess, he discovered that the driver was his wife. Just before the war they had separated through jealousy on both sides. Neither knew that the other had left Australia to "join up." Two days after their discovery husband and wife were in occupation of married quarters.

In the course of my duty I took over many batches of prisoners of war, most of them from the Navy. The first lot I had to do with consisted of the survivors of the *Königin Luise*, which one of our ships sank in the earliest days of the war. Later on, when most of the survivors of the *Mainz*—a batch of about a hundred and eighty—were brought in, I might have met a prisoner of some distinction. An urgent telegram was received from the War Office enquiring, on behalf of the United States Legation in London, as to whether Lieutenant von Tirpitz was among our prisoners. The reply was in the negative, and it was some days before it was ascertained, and Admiral von Tirpitz informed, that his son had been landed on the North Coast.

Among the *Mainz* officers whom I knew was another of interesting parentage; son of the Chief of the German Naval Intelligence. The name was either Pohle or Tholens. He must have found it aggravating to see so much of our Navy and not be able to communicate with his father. Chatham also had a few of the survivors of the *Blücher*, the sinking of which provided one of the most thrilling pictures of any incident of the war in the snapshot taken by one of our naval officers of the deck of the ship as she lay on her side. A London paper paid him a big price for the negative, and he got into trouble for letting them have it. I told the story in my other book of taking over the officers and crew of the *Aud*, otherwise *Libau*, an auxiliary steamer of the German Navy, flying the Norwegian flag, which was captured when attempting to land arms in Ireland. Last year the skipper of the *Aud*, Captain Karl Spindler, with whom I

had a long conversation while he was my prisoner at Chatham, published a very interesting story of his experiences, which would make an excellent book of adventure for boys. By the way, another even more interesting book of the kind was published when I was on the Rhine—Lieutenant Mucke's exciting and amusing account of his privateering work in the Indian Ocean.

I never felt more proud of being an Englishman than in comparing our treatment of German prisoners—particularly in this country—with the Germans' treatment of theirs. I remember seeing a party off from Chatham on their transfer to a prisoners-of-war camp. It was a bitterly cold day, and the Germans, although provided with warm underclothing, had no gloves, which were not an "authorised issue." Seeing a very youthful prisoner trying to rub some life into his blue hands, one of the escort pulled off his own woollen gloves and held them out to him, saying cheerily, "You'd better try these, matey." In the many letters from prisoners to their relations in Germany which I had to read one sentence seemed to predominate—"We have plenty of good food."

In various ways the War Office occasionally made concessions so as to minimise the hardships of prisoners. The German officers in a P.-of-W. camp near Blackheath complained that they suffered from want of exercise—one of them, by the way, was the champion high-jump of Germany—and, although they were outside my area, I was ordered to ascertain whether it would be practicable to exercise them outside the camp. Thus I had the unusual experience of taking some twenty German officers for a country walk after they had given their parole that they would not attempt to escape. They were not required to march in any formation, and the only escort consisted of two sergeants of the camp guard, both unarmed, and four civil and four military police in case of any hostile demonstration on the road. This

precaution proved quite unnecessary. The people whom we passed, or who accompanied us part of the way, showed no sign of hostility, but seemed interested in the party of enemy officers, several of whom were wearing the smart peace-time uniforms of their regiments, which, they told me, their friends had sent them from Germany for Sunday wear.

I suppose it is generally known that only one officer-prisoner succeeded in escaping from this country, Lieut.-Commander Pluschow, who afterwards wrote to the Commandant of Donnington Hall thanking him for his hospitality. Two, who had got on board a boat and were captured out at sea, were handed over to me at Chatham and were returned to Donnington Hall. A sergeant-major, who had escaped from the Dorchester Camp, got as far as Gravesend and very nearly to Holland. A big wooden case consigned to Rotterdam was accidentally let fall from the crane-chain on to the deck, and a hole was stove in its side, through which a man's arm was visible. It proved to be one of the escaped sergeant-major's.

Here I must tell an amazing story of how the War Office ingenuously—it could not have been deliberate—ordered that two German sergeants arrested at Gravesend should be released and permitted to return to their country to fight against us. They had, among others, been temporarily lent by the German military authorities to the Dutch Colonial Army to drill the native troops in Java, and, in consequence, they were wearing the Dutch uniform on the voyage back to Germany. A few days later they would have been with their German regiments, wearing their usual uniforms. Needless to say, their arrest was perfectly regular; and when I got them to Chatham they made no secret of their nationality. But the skipper of the Dutch boat from which we had taken them—like most of his nationality, a strong partisan of Germany—went up to London and

complained to the Dutch Legation that two Dutch soldiers had been arrested on board his boat. Presumably, it was some very young staff officer at the War office who, without asking for any confirmation of the Dutchman's story, took on himself to telegraph to Chatham that the two men were to be released immediately and put on board any boat sailing for Holland.

We had more than our fair share of air-raids at Chatham, and sometimes they kept the A.P.M. and military police busy. At Woolwich, Captain Wills, the officer deputising for me there, missed a bomb which killed two people just in front of him. My liveliest night was that of the awful catastrophe when over a hundred men in the naval barracks at Chatham were killed by one bomb. According to a widely circulated story about my having arrested a man who had just signalled to the German aircraft, I ought to have been close to the place at the time ; but, as a matter of fact, I was riding, incompletely dressed, to the other end of the town, where another bomb—we had almost a hailstorm of them that night—had demolished a house. By the way, the first night after I had taken over my A.P.M. job I had retired to rest in a lodging-house, where I was temporarily quartered, when the alarm was given. I sprang out of bed, and, while women were skrieking in the street and a pom-pom was yapping out its futile little shells close by, I was struggling with my clothes in the darkness—the electric light was cut off—when my landlady opened the door and remarked “Lor ! sir, those Germans give a lot of trouble, don’t they ? ”

Apropos of air-raids, the story has never yet been published of an incident by which the lives of some three dozen eminent Admirals and Generals were in serious jeopardy, although far from any fighting zone. They were assembled near Chatham from all parts of the country to witness important bombing experiments. The Royal Naval Air Force—since merged into the

R.A.F.—were to drop bombs on to trenches specially constructed for the purpose. A cordon of soldiers some six miles long was formed around the place, and no one, regardless of rank, was permitted inside it without a pass signed by the A.P.M. The King was to have been there, but it was decided that as, in spite of precautions, accidents might happen, it would be inadvisable.

As a guide for the bombers, great lengths of sailcloth were spread out to mark the position of the trenches, and it did not occur to a young staff officer who had made arrangements for the refreshment of the visitors that the white tent which he had had erected for the purpose at a presumably safe distance from the objective might have been mistaken for one of the guide-marks. The distinguished officers, anxious to get a clear view, ignored the shelters under which they were to have taken cover, and were standing close to the tent when the aeroplanes started dropping bombs on the trenches near the sailcloth. Two of them, seeing another white patch farther on, made for it, and each dropped a bomb which only just missed the tent and the officers standing near it. At the moment I was in the tent sampling our General's hospitality—it might have been my last whisky-and-soda. Close by I had formed a park of the cars in which the officers had come from Chatham, London, and elsewhere; a bomb bursting among such a quantity of petrol would have given the chauffeurs a rather bad time.

I have related in my other book an interesting experience in connection with a sergeant in one of our regiments at home who spoke English with a strong German accent, spoke German in his sleep, had enlisted under an English name, although his real name was German, was supposed to be identical with a German who in the early days of the war had been turned out of Finland by the Russian Police, and had formed a liaison with an

English lady who was in a position in which she might obtain important military information.

Here is another experience with a suspect: When I was in London, officiating for the Deputy Provost Marshal at the headquarters of Eastern Command, I happened to meet an acquaintance who had business associations with the American Press, but was an Englishman. He was accompanied by a young American dressed in the uniform of a United States infantry soldier, with nothing to show to what unit he belonged. Seeing that I observed this deficiency, he volunteered the information that he belonged to the United States Intelligence Corps, hinting that he was at that time engaged in Secret Service duties. He interested me so much that I made an appointment to meet him again, and at our second meeting my suspicions were confirmed.

After leaving him I got into communication with the military attaché of the United States Embassy, and he came "right away" to my office in Pall Mall and took a written statement from me, with the result that the young man was arrested as a suspect at a place where I had reason to believe he could be found. He admitted that he had no right to wear the uniform, and said that he was over here for two American magazines, and gave his—or, rather, a—name and an address in New York where he said he lived. Cables were immediately sent over to investigate his statements—all of which proved to be false. The United States military authorities in this country then decided to try him as a suspect. He was taken down to the American camp near Winchester, and I was requested to hold myself in readiness to attend the court martial, which would be held under American martial law. But the trial never took place, because the prisoner, in an attempt to escape at night, was fatally injured by a sentry. So far as I could ascertain, the mystery of his identity and intentions was never

cleared up. One reason for supposing that he was not an authorised spy was that he was so short of funds that, as it afterwards transpired, he had robbed one casual lady acquaintance in London of her watch, and another of cash. He had imposed on my friend by means of a forged letter of introduction.

One of the most sensational stories circulated during the war was the ridiculous assertion—utilised not long ago as fact for the purpose of a cinema film—that the *Hampshire* which sank with Lord Kitchener on board, was deliberately mined by the Germans, who knew that he was there, and that they had got their information from a woman spy in London. There was probably in the whole war no secret better kept than Kitchener's destination when he suddenly disappeared from the War Office. His most intimate friends, and even members of his personal staff, were kept in the dark. The captain of his ship had no idea that he was going to have so distinguished a passenger, and I was told afterwards that the Scotland Yard detective who always accompanied him knew only that he had to pack his suitcase, as Lord Kitchener was "going away for a few days." There are still many people who insist that the sensational film story was founded on fact. I have just been reading a newspaper account of a mass meeting (appropriately held in a picture-house) at which a resolution was passed demanding a full report of the official enquiry into the loss of the ship for the information of the public.

Another equally well kept secret was that of the plans for the famous attack on Zeebrugge. When the naval authorities requested the military authorities at Chatham to provide facilities for some very special and strenuous physical training of bluejackets and marines no hint was conveyed as to the object. I used to watch the men, fully armed, scrambling up slippery walls specially constructed for the purpose, with no idea that it had

such a definite purpose ; and the General who made the arrangements and the military physical training officers who carried them out knew no more than I did.

By the way, when I was with the Rhine Army, and in charge of the issue of permits to Germans requiring to enter Occupied Territory, there was a big German posted outside my door to prevent my being disturbed by casual visitors. When I left the office in the winter months he always helped me into my greatcoat. One day, when he was stooping down to straighten out the skirt, I noticed a deep scar on the top of his head, and asked him where he got it. "At Zeebrugge, Herr Major," he said. "Your marines are nasty men to meet when they use their bayonets." He had been a petty officer in the German Navy.

The spy-mania does not yet seem to have died down. I am still told wonderful stories of the past—of "Spies" operating in various parts, and even being arrested and shot, of whom nothing appears to have been known by the military authorities. It seems unfortunate that the War Office, Admiralty, and India Office do not, in conjunction, publish a complete history of cases which actually occurred. It could be sold for the benefit of some charitable fund, and truth is often stranger than fiction.

The public has probably never heard of the German naval lieutenant who got into Gibraltar disguised as a wounded Roumanian officer, and was made a fuss of until he was accidentally recognised by one of our naval officers who, shortly before the war, had made his acquaintance in the Far East ; nor of the British officer (also at Gibraltar) who was to carry dispatches (fortunately of no great importance) to our Madrid Embassy, and, before leaving Gibraltar, was drugged and relieved of the papers. Then, too, the story of the arrest and execution in India of, alas ! an Englishman found collecting information about the embarkation of our

troops from Bombay and trying to wireless it to a German ship, and being tried and shot, would make sensational reading. It was in India, too, that an intelligence officer, searching for traces of German activities in that country (like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack), arrested a German officer who, with the characteristic thoroughness of his race, had tramped from Pekin (where he had been stationed with the Legation Guard before the war) to the heart of India, presumably in search of information or for propaganda work among the natives. As there was no actual evidence against him, he was only interned until the end of the war.

Apropos of Pekin, when the war broke out several of the German Legation staff disappeared, as it was supposed, in a westerly direction on definite, pre-arranged missions. I happened to meet a niece of one of them when I was stationed in Cologne, and she told me that her uncle, named Merklinghausen, dragoman to the German Legation, had never been heard of since the declaration of war. When in London on leave, I made enquiries in a certain reliable quarter, and ascertained that Merklinghausen was one of those who had suddenly disappeared, and that he had probably been included in a small party of Germans who had been shot by Chinese soldiers when attempting to blow up the line on the Trans-Siberia Railway.

My duties occasionally brought me into association with the Intelligence Service, which in this country was occupied mostly in searching for persons engaged in obtaining information for the enemy as to our war organisation and, particularly, our coast defences. I was impressed by its lack of co-ordination, and, still more, by the unsuitability of many of the Intelligence Officers. Apart from the admirably efficient Intelligence Branch of the War Office, quite sufficient for the purpose, the headquarters of the Home Forces had its own

intelligence officers, and each of the Defence Areas, of which the Thames and Medway was the most important, possessed an I.O.

The overlapping and waste of energy were sometimes ridiculous, and, owing to the obvious inadequacy of many of the personnel, the I.O. got to be nicknamed the "V.I.," which stood for "Village Idiot." But in the fighting-zone were many I.O.'s who were by no means V.I.'s.

I had an amusing experience in this connection. When a batch of prisoners from a captured aircraft of considerable importance, because supposed to contain some of the newest devices, was in my charge, intelligence officers of all sorts and sizes, and of both Services, arrived to obtain information from the prisoners on technical subjects. The officer who did most of the questioning seemed to treat each of the crew in turn as if trying him by court martial—obviously the worst possible method—and went away apparently unsatisfied. The next day two younger officers (including Ashmead Barlett, the present M.P.) came down, and by conciliatory methods were a little more successful.

Before the prisoners left for their permanent destination their warrant officer told me that each of the crew, as part of his training, had been coached in all questions—over forty, he said—which they might be asked in case of capture, and how to answer them.

Only those who had personal experience of it and its achievements can appreciate the efficiency of that branch of the War Office which, under Colonel (now Sir Vernon) Kell, Director of Military Intelligence, dealt with espionage in this country. While excited amateur detectives were discovering spies (in their imagination) every day, Colonel Kell's specially selected officers were intelligently, methodically, and secretively carrying on with their job of spy-hunting. But, nevertheless, a curious incident occurred, the story of which I promised not to repeat

until after the war. Possibly it was only a coincidence that one of the juvenile messengers attached to a very important branch of the War Office proved to be the offspring of a man of German birth, strongly suspected of espionage, and at that time under constant observation.

As a minor instance of the thoroughness of Colonel Kell's counter-espionage organisation : One day I enquired whether they had any dossier about a certain man of foreign antecedents and no visible means of livelihood, whom I regarded as a very dangerous character before the war. I was told that he was "on the list" and believed to be in a certain South American city ; and all the information which I could give about him was taken down by one of the officers. A few days later I discovered that he had been seen in Piccadilly, and had said that he had just come from South America, but had given no clue to his address in London. Within twenty-four hours he was located, and, as there was no definite charge against him, he was only deported back to the place whence he had come as an "undesirable." He has, I believe, not been seen over here since.

The "man in the street" had, and has as yet, no idea of the courage and brilliant achievements of some of our Secret Service agents, naval as much as military. In this connection I recall an amusing incident which came to my knowledge when Gravesend—where persons in the service of Germany, or suspected of being so, more than once endeavoured to land or embark—was in my area of provost duties. A ragged-looking young man, claiming to be a Dutchman, a passenger on a steamer from Holland, excited the suspicions of the Port Military Police (a force formed specially for duty during the war), and, failing to satisfy them, was arrested as a suspect. He requested to be taken before a military officer, and was conducted to the office of the staff captain at Gravesend, and he urgently begged that he might be left alone with him. When the escort had withdrawn

the prisoner explained that he was a British officer and was engaged on secret service, adding that, after performing certain duties in Germany, he had tried in vain to land at two other British ports, but had been put back on the ship on which he had arrived. It did not require long to confirm his story. The "Dutchman" had somehow not been acquainted with the one word which, uttered to any officer in staff uniform, would have passed him and afforded him immediate facilities for communicating with the War Office through the nearest military telephone. After I had been given the word and the instructions, I used to hope that I might be the fortunate one selected by some secretly landed "agent." I was sure that the moment had arrived when one day in a Chatham street a man in civilian dress, with a beard such as the spy of the illustrated magazine story would use as a disguise, stopped me and politely asked whether he might speak to me privately. I took him down a side-street and waited for the magic word, but he merely said that he was an ex-officer, had been in trouble and was on his "beam-ends," and asked for the loan of half a crown.

In the Thames and Medway Garrison we had the satisfaction of believing that we were nearer the fighting line—in fact, we might be actually in it—than any other garrison in the country. Those of the great military authorities who saw a possibility of a German landing, or an attempt in that direction, seemed to agree that it would be on the coast of Kent, close to the Isle of Sheppey. Hence the great importance of the T. and M. Defences. The General and his staff were for many months engaged on not only the defences themselves, but an exhaustive "Emergency Scheme," filling some sixty pages of a printed book (of which even the A.P.M. had four pages allotted to him), giving in detail the duties of every unit of the garrison on receipt of the momentous order to be conveyed by the one word, "Move."

The word was given, as a test, at three o'clock one morning, and no one knew that it was coming, except the Commander-in-Chief of Eastern Command, General (now Field-Marshal) Robertson, who gave it, and his staff. Just as the enemy's troopships—they would actually have depended largely on huge rafts—were theoretically nearing our shores, Chatham, Rochester, Gillingham, Sheppey, Grain, Sittingbourne, and Gravesend woke up and got to work. Guns were manned, and military police kept the road for forty miles clear for the columns of infantry (several brigades) and transport, which were soon moving to their positions. It was a rather exciting affair, but seemed one-sided, as the Germans did not turn up.

In spite of everlasting work, there was always time and brain for ventilating any sense of humour. Outside the door of the general staff officers' room was a notice in Italian, which no one not acquainted with the language could understand, unless it was explained to him. It signified, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here," and expressed the sentiments of a disappointed officer who had looked in vain for promotion. Inside the waiting-room, in which many an officer spent an hour or more waiting to see the General, was a big notice informing impatient visitors that, "They also serve who stand and wait." The most brilliant humourist was Colonel "Archie" Crawford, our A.A. and Q.M.G., some of whose witticisms have been quoted throughout the Army; the best of his war-time achievements of that kind being that classic, founded on *ars longa, vita brevis*.

On Armistice Day I was at Courtrai, in Belgium, which had been evacuated by the Germans. They had crossed the Scheldt in a very disorganised condition, and our troops were to have started in pursuit the following day. Somehow—I never knew how—we got the news of the cessation of hostilities the evening before London knew of it, and it was celebrated by our men

with an outburst of exultation, but, with the disgraceful exception of one unit, there was no breakdown of discipline. All sorts of Belgians, including ladies of some local position, besieged our mess, shaking hands with us excitedly—and, alas! finishing our stock of whisky.

The following morning the owner of the house arrived from Brussels, where he had been living since the Germans first occupied Courtrai. We apologised for having neither wine nor whisky to offer him, but he relieved the situation by fetching a lamp and shovel, and, after some digging at the bottom of the garden, produced bottles of burgundy, claret, and champagne, part of a secret store which the German officers, who had previously occupied the house, had not discovered. When our glasses were filled he gave us a graphic account of scenes which he had witnessed that morning in Brussels. The mutinous German troops, members of the new "Soldiers' and Workmen's Union," on the refusal of their officers to join it, had driven some twenty of them into a house and opened fire on it with machine guns. Most of the officers were killed. This was only one instance of the collapse of that exaggerated and brutal discipline of which all Germany had previously boasted.

## CHAPTER XVI

### IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY

THE original British Army of the Rhine, which occupied Düren, Cologne, Bonn, and other places shortly after the Armistice, would provide sufficient material for a volume by itself, either as a record or an historical event in the story of the "Great Adventure." It was a wonderful history of the British Army or as a supplement to the force, as different from the little garrison of eight thousand smartly drilled, well-dressed young soldiers who have been occupying the Rhine territory for seven years, as the war itself was from an Aldershot Review. It was a remarkable mixture of over a hundred thousand men ; composed of a few—too few—old soldiers, remnants of the famous army which left England in 1914 ; mostly temporary soldiers of the "new" armies who had been through the thick of it for several years, and were now looking forward to demobilisation ; a considerable number of men of more or less non-combatant units, who had seen the war only at a distance from the trenches ; and the "Boy Battalions," fresh from Home, enlisted for the special purpose of replacing the war-worn troops on the Rhine.

There was a sick-of-the-war atmosphere about the whole force ; all who had fought were out for enjoying life, as they had not done for several years—in many cases as they had never done before ; and there was here and there a too obvious tendency to resent the restrictions of garrison discipline. But, on the whole, the discipline was as good as could be expected from men who had

hitherto regarded it only as a necessary accompaniment to actual warfare. In this respect the New Zealanders impressed everyone, Germans included, by their immaculate appearance, exemplary conduct, and their chivalrous treatment of the native population. After the strangeness of it all had worn off, the men found no lack of female society, particularly in the villages. Occasionally young Germans would violently resent the attentions of British soldiers to the young women who reciprocated.

In spite of Intelligence reports of ingenuous "V.I.'s" (see previous chapter) and the fussiness of two or three excitable Generals, the Occupation, from a military point of view, was little more than a sinecure. But at Düren, where I joined the Rhine Army as a provost officer, we had to keep a watchful eye on the activities of a dangerous element of Communism ; and in March 1920 our troops elsewhere had to be prepared for trouble during the Communist rising in Essen and other towns in unoccupied Germany, when a considerable force of the Reichswehr (including a General), routed by the well-armed and drilled red Army, escaped into our territory and surrendered to a handful of British soldiers, to escape being massacred by their own compatriots. We nominally interned them for their own safety, and fed them well—they were almost starving, and their General was brought into Cologne and treated hospitably by some of our officers of his rank. The horrors of the short Reign of Terror before the Reds were overwhelmed by a superior force of troops were depicted to me by some of the interned German officers. They declared that the Communists had cut off the ears of some of the Reichswehr officers whom they had captured and had murdered several in cold blood, and had committed even worse outrages among the plutocrat civilians.

And the Occupation had a peculiarly personal interest. I had been intimately acquainted with the

Rhine as a boy, and later as a youth. The German young woman who used to be my sisters' maid, Barbara by name, but Babetchen to us, was at past seventy years, still living in Boppard, her native village. I showed the manager of one of the Bonn hotels the room in which I had slept at the time of the war between Prussia and Denmark ; and at Coblenz I discovered in a white-haired shop-proprietress the girl in the cigar-shop to whom I used to make love soon after the Franco-Prussian War. Those were delightful Sundays, when I revisited scenes of happy memories ; and before I started from Cologne on my day's outing, even as I still lay in bed, I could revel in the glorious singing of the famous boy choir of St. Cecilia Church which stood at the end of the garden of the house where I was billeted.

The remarkable ignorance of German among officers whose jobs brought them into contact with the inhabitants occasionally provided bits of comedy. Two young German girls presented themselves at the Cologne Provost Marshal's office to offer evidence on behalf of one of our soldiers who had had a violent altercation with some of their compatriots and had been arrested. The officer on duty, not being able to understand them, ordered them out of the office, and, as they hesitated to go, he directed a military policeman to arrest them. After they had been locked up for several hours an interpreter arrived, and they were released. An elderly temporary officer whose services were retained nominally on account of his (supposed) knowledge of German, after failing to make a restaurant waiter understand his (the officer's) version of the tongue, exclaimed indignantly, "What is the good of these chaps if they cannot understand their own language ? "

The military police one day brought in a German who had arrived by train with a suspicious-looking wooden case, which, when opened, was found to contain a quantity of round tins bearing the labels, apparently of a popular

brand of English cigarettes. That was regarded as *prima facie* evidence that he had come by them improperly, as those cigarettes were not then obtainable, except in our canteens. The officer, on examining the labels, found that in one letter only the name of the brand was misspelt, although the rest of the label was a faultless imitation. When some of the tins were opened they were found to be full of sawdust. "I have been swindled," said the German. "I bought them from another German as — cigarettes. Please let me have them back, as I can easily sell them to someone else." This is a good illustration of the ingenuity and enterprise of the German war profiteer.

I must tell a story at my own expense. One Saturday, at the time when intercourse of our officers and the German civilians was discouraged, a staff officer of my acquaintance asked me if I would join him in a trip up the Rhine the following day. He said that he had booked one of the steam-launches which had been commandeered for the use of officers, and had invited another officer and two ladies. I gladly accepted the invitation, concluding that the ladies were connected with the British forces. When I arrived at the quay from which we were to start the other officer of the party was waiting for me, and told me that Captain —, our host, was sorry that he was detailed for duty and could not accompany us ; the ladies were already on board. When we joined them I was, to my surprise, introduced to two German ladies, one of whom was quite young and remarkably pretty—I have an excellent photograph of her. It was too late to change my mind, and, as we skimmed up the river, I observed that British officers on other launches which we passed seemed much interested in us, although they were not near enough to discover the nationality of the ladies. I knew the cause when, on admiring the luxurious appointments of the boat, I was told by the German skipper that it was the Commander-in-Chief's own particular "yacht," which

obviously must have been allotted to my friend in error. Fortunately it happened that at that time the C.-in-C. was on leave in England. We had a very pleasant day, but rather expensive, because of the large quantity of peach-cup and costly viands consumed at a river-side restaurant by the German ladies. It ~~might~~ have cost me more dearly.

The splendid Cologne Opera was regularly supported by our troops of all ranks. I have known as many as three hundred seats occupied by British soldiers, apart from officers, at one performance. In fact, a considerable number of our men thus cultivated a taste for good music during their service in or near Cologne. Many of the officers, however, attended the opera as if it were a mere social function. One night, in a performance of *The Meistersinger*, the orchestra was giving a superb rendering of one of the finest passages when a sudden pause in the music took two of our Brigadier-Generals, engaged in earnest conversation, by surprise. Throughout the whole house there was a reverent stillness in which the proverbial fall of a pin might have been heard, disturbed only by the remark in a loud tone of one of these officers: "Well, it's a matter of opinion, but I think Alfred Lester much funnier than George Robey." Yet we protest that we are not an unmusical nation.

Apropos of German orchestras, the evening of the first anniversary of Peace Day it was arranged in our G. H. Q. mess that after dinner we should rise exactly when the hands of the clock pointed to nine and drink "The King" spontaneously; as it was regarded as unfair to expect our permanent German orchestra to play our National Anthem it was decided to dispense with it. But, to our surprise, after we had drunk the toast the musicians struck up their "Heil Dir im Siegeskrantz," which they knew was the air of "God Save the King." As we drank the other toasts—"France," "Belgium," "Italy," "America," and "Japan" (each country

being represented by one or two liaison officers)—the orchestra played the national anthem of each country in turn. The conductor had astutely guessed what would happen on the occasion, and had rehearsed the several airs beforehand, regarding it as the duty of the orchestra, for which we paid, to serve us as one of our own nationality would have done. Needless to say, we expressed our appreciation, both by word and bottle.

There can be very few British officers, and there are probably no civilians, who are aware that a certain officer of rather high rank in our Army of Occupation nearly caused a serious international complication. I was in a position at the time to be acquainted with the circumstances. The officer referred to had been out for a whole-day joy-ride with several ladies in his official car, and on his way back to Cologne had to pass through the American zone. Each of the nationalities had examining posts along their boundary lines to prevent the entrance of Germans not in possession of the required permit, and every car had to halt for the occupants to be identified, officers of the other Allied Armies invariably conforming to this rule. But, as this car approached the American post, the British officer referred to, for some unaccountable reason, ordered his chauffeur not to halt. In vain the American military policeman on the post waved his red lamp—it was dark at the time—and he had to spring on to one side to avoid being run over. Americans are proverbially thorough in their methods, and the man was provided with a motor-bicycle. He overtook the car, and, threatening the officer with a revolver, persuaded him to stop. Having identified himself, the delinquent was permitted to proceed. He supposed that the incident was closed, but in due course a communication was received by the British military authorities at Cologne from the American Commander-in-Chief at Coblenz, taking the matter very seriously, as he was certainly entitled to do, and the

situation was distinctly embarrassing to our authorities. But just in time to stop the matter being referred to the War Office, which, on account of the high rank of the officer concerned, it must have been, the American General, on second thoughts, requested that it might be settled locally ; and an apology was accepted.

It always seemed to be regrettable that the officers of the two nationalities did not cultivate one another's acquaintance as much as they might have done. Had they done so, ours would have discovered that the peculiarities of the American officer are only on the surface, and that he is really a very good fellow. When any of them returned such entertainment as I and a few others offered them occasionally in Cologne, we had a good time in Coblenz ; and I recall the very friendly relations between the officers of the two armies when I was at Tientsin before the war.

I remember a particular incident characteristic of the good type of American officer. One night, observing that I was trying to find seats for two German ladies, strangers to me, in the last and overcrowded train from Mayence to Cologne, an American came to my assistance by offering them seats in his compartment, which was reserved for officers of the Allied Armies. Otherwise, they would have been stranded in Mayence for the night. A few days later I happened to meet one of the ladies in Cologne. She stopped to thank me, and mentioned that two officers in the compartment that night—I abstain from giving their nationality—evidently the worse for drink, had made insulting remarks about her and her companion, and that the American officer had warned them that he was responsible for the ladies, having taken charge of them at the request of a British officer. The result was that, as he was their superior in rank, they caused no more annoyance.

Many soldiers of the Rhine Army seemed to think that their few French words would help them as much in

Germany, as they had done in France. A corporal, catering for an officer's mess, was trying to buy a fowl off a Cologne market-stall. Being at loss for either the German or French for "fowl," he resorted to an ingenious substitute by asking the German woman for an "*œuf mère*." When I was stationed at Düren, one of our men was looking into a farmyard when a cow, escaped from its stable, sprang over the ditch between the farm and the road and galloped away as hard as she could. The German farmer happened to come out of the house, and the soldier shouted to him, "I say, mounseer, your doolay's gone promenade."

A regrettable incident of the early period of the Occupation, which might have resulted in serious complications, was when in one of the officer's clubs at Cologne, to which ladies were admitted for lunch or dinner, a temporary officer's permanent and untidy spouse made an onslaught on the smart little wife of a French officer, whom she accused of laughing at her. I was in the club at the time. When wives were first permitted to join their husbands on the Rhine many a temporary officer, and good soldier, who had accustomed himself to the social amenities of his rank, found himself handicapped by a wife who, giving herself the airs of a "General's lady," was of a type which seemed to have come from Bermondsey while pretending to have come from Peckham.

London newspapers could have made good copy out of the following story, but it was not permitted to reach them. A certain Cabinet Minister came to visit the Rhine Garrison more or less officially. He was possibly unaware of his unpopularity in the Army at that time, and the military display in his honour seemed overdone. At the Army Horse Show, when he drove on to the ground, a number of young soldiers, of course off duty, showed signs of their disapproval in a regrettable manner. But that was not all. The feeling was aggravated by the

Cologne Garrison having to parade for his edification. In consequence, that night, at a torchlight tattoo in his honour, soldiers took advantage of the darkness to express their annoyance more forcibly than they had done at the horse show.

One outstanding occurrence created something like a scandal in the Rhine Army, but no English newspaper got hold of it. Some of our officers were billeted in a separate wing (commandeered for the purpose) of the mansion of a certain middle-aged German lady of exalted rank. Before they had been there long she, in spite of her years, was conspicuously enamoured of one of them, a good-looking young fellow of about thirty. It became so conspicuous that she was cautioned, and peremptorily requested to keep to her own portion of her house, and the officer was transferred elsewhere. Later on I heard from a German officer that before the war she had been severely reprimanded by the Kaiser himself for her marked attentions to two officers of a German regiment stationed in her town. If I were to identify the lady, which seems undesirable, this story would be more interesting.

On one of my week-end tramps in the Rhine country—by which I kept myself fit, also better acquainted with the native population—on the pathway up to the top of one of the so-called Eifel “Mountains” I overtook a big, strapping peasant girl and we got into conversation. She seemed to regard me with an air of suspicion, until she asked, “Tell me, why do you go about dressed as an English officer?” Needless to say, I was flattered by the compliment to my German. “I happen to be an English officer,” I replied. “Then,” she said, “you can tell me something. Is it true that our bombs completely destroyed New York?” When I answered her that no German aircraft had reached America, she remarked “What a lot of lies our newspapers must have told us!” And I confirmed her suspicion.

We parted at the top, and when I enquired for a bedroom at the inn the landlord (an ex-sergeant-major in a crack German regiment) warned me that there was going to be a dance there that evening, which would be attended by ex-soldiers living in the neighbouring villages. "But," he added, "they will treat you with the respect due to an officer." Later on I found that, to get to my bedroom, I had to pass through the "ball-room" while dancing was in full swing. A smart, soldierly, middle-aged man, observing my hesitation, immediately stopped the dance and made way for me through the throng, most of the men standing to attention as I passed them. When the ball was over, past midnight, I was sitting on the verandah, and, as the dancers passed me on their way home, many of the men saluted, but sometimes their lady companions had to support them while they did so; one of them, overcome by the effort and the landlord's beer, fell down the flight of steps on to the road below.

I have only once seen Marshal Foch, and thereto hangs a little story significant of the German's sense of discipline. The Marshal had been paying a visit of inspection to the Allied troops on the Rhine, and it was arranged that on his journey back to France the train should stop at Düren for the British Corps Commander there and his staff to pay their respects to him. Elaborate precautions were made to protect him from any hostile demonstration by the German populace.

Düren is an important railway centre, and has several high railway officials who in the ordinary course would carry swords with their uniform, but we had deprived them of their purely ornamental weapons, presumably for the safety of the forty thousand British troops stationed in Düren. The evening before the event two representatives of these officials called on me at my office with a humble request that their swords should be returned to them temporarily, so that they might be properly dressed for the occasion and pay due respect to

the distinguished General—the man who had contributed so largely to the humiliation of their Fatherland.

One morning in Cologne, at a time when I foresaw the possibility of my job of British Permit Officer of the Rhine Army being abolished and I was wondering what I should do next, Brigadier-General Rogers, Provost Marshal of the Rhine Army, paid me an unexpected visit at my office. He had just received a War Office telegram offering him the job of organising a new police force in Constantinople, and asked me if I would accompany him as his staff officer. Needless to say, I jumped at it. But it never materialised, owing to the French insisting on doing the work. It is well known that the result was far from satisfactory.

Apropos of General Rogers, who before the Armistice was Provost Marshal of the Overseas Forces, successor to Brigadier-General Horwood (now Commissioner of Metropolitan Police), I recall his "Farewell Order" to the military police, in which he summarised the fine work they had done in the war, and thus made some amends for a conspicuous oversight in the great G.H.Q. Dispatch after the Armistice, in which the Commander-in-Chief set out at length his recognition of the services of commanders and staffs of all sorts, fighting units, and non-combatant corps and departments, giving the Military Police Corps only three or four perfunctory lines. It was, presumably, the omission of some staff officer who had not seen much of the war outside his office.

I look back rather proudly to my four years' association with the Military Police Corps ("Red Caps"), and having commanded the largest area force of them in England, excepting London and Aldershot, and been responsible for the training of most of my lot. My experience of M.P. overseas was of limited duration, but I saw quite enough to appreciate their patience, wonderful resourcefulness in their multifarious jobs and devotion to duty. Although not strictly speaking combatants, they were

frequently under fire, mainly in connection with traffic control (one of their most important duties), and several lost their lives through sticking to dangerous posts in the absence of any officer or superior N.C.O. to order their retirement.

In Düren, with the Army of Occupation, my ridiculously inadequate little force of M.P. were busy day and night, not only keeping over-exuberant young soldiers in order, but searching for arms and enforcing obedience by the population to the military governor's regulations, particularly those which applied to women of a certain class. In Cologne the British military police, with their variety of duties, by the thoroughness, yet good temper, with which they performed them, earned the respect and admiration of the Germans.

## CHAPTER XVII

### BANDIT HUNTING

Two years after the Armistice, when I was thinking that my khaki would be of no further use before the next war, I had reason "from information received," as the police say, to call at the Foreign Office. After a brief interview with an important official I was fixed up with the job of Police Control Officer with the Inter-Allied Commission in Upper Silesia, subject to the approval of the War Office and my passing in French and German. The former was a matter of course; the latter was accomplished in less than an hour; and the following day I was on my way to Oppeln, the headquarters of the commission. Arrived there, I reported myself to the British High Commissioner (Colonel Percival), and was taken round by him to be introduced to the French and Italian High Commissioners. The following day I took over charge of the Tarnowitz Police Area and a force of about a hundred and seventy armed police (fifty less than required), half Germans, half Poles, with two German and two Polish officers.

My former volume of reminiscences was in the publisher's hands when I left for Upper Silesia, but months later, after the printer's proofs were corrected, I added a postscript on my experiences there, which by no means exhausted the subject.

Before I had settled down in my new job I realised that it was not a soft one. The quaint old town of Tarnowitz, inhabited almost entirely by Germans, was quite law-abiding, but the country round furnished several little

gangs of ruffians who sallied forth at night to waylay and rob defenceless Germans, or to attack their houses. Then, too, my area included a stretch of frontier over which Poles were always trying to smuggle arms from Poland, to prepare for the rising which came in 1922.

In my other volume I described some of the bandits' most vicious outrages. Here is another: One night a gang got into Tarnowitz and blew up a monument to the memory of the men of the town who had fallen in the Great War. Fortunately their dynamite cartridges were not so effective as was intended, the coffins under the monument being undisturbed. As I had a habit of turning out at all hours of the night, when least expected, they chose for their purpose a time when I was away on a flying visit to a neighbouring district, and the night patrol of the town police (not my men) was known to be at some distance away.

The most wholesale and brutal outrage by the Poles that I can recall was in another police area. A mob, too big for police to deal with, attacked barracks occupied by some of the pre-war German gendarmerie, whose services had been retained by the Inter-Allied Commission. The men held out desperately, until the attackers promised not to hurt them if they came out one by one. As each of them passed out of the door he was dragged away and shot. Some of our troops were soon on the scene and the mob had reason to regret it.

The bandits near Tarnowitz had a nasty trick of trying to upset my car when I was on night patrol, probably with a view to attacking my party while we were at a disadvantage. On several occasions the chauffeur pulled up just in time to prevent our running into a wall of loose stones, hastily put up across the road. Then, while the police officer accompanying me and I pulled down the obstruction, our escort (three police) stood ready with their carbines in case of an attack. Occasionally, when big bodies of bandits were making

trouble at night, we patrolled in force, with a large party of police in one lorry and about thirty French soldiers in another, sometimes with successful results.

From the social point of view Tarnowitz was not all that I might have desired, but I found plenty of amusement, as well as occupation, in my job. Excepting the District Commissioner, I was the only British officer in, or anywhere near, the town until, just before I transferred elsewhere, one of our battalions arrived. Unfortunately there was no enthusiastic spirit of comradeship between the French and British officers in most, not all, parts of Upper Silesia ; and the fault was decidedly not on our side. But I managed to get on well with some individual officers of the French infantry regiment and artillery battery in Tarnowitz ; and I recall a particular case in which a French officer sought to do me a good turn.

One night, with a number of police and French soldiers, I was out searching for a very desperate character who was "wanted" for two murders. He was supposed to have hidden himself in a hay-loft which could be approached only by a ladder. The prospect for the first man to go up of being knocked on the head or shot when he got to the top was fairly certain, but someone had to lead the way, and, as it was a police job, and I was in charge of the police, I, with no keen anticipation, decided that I must do it. I had got my foot on the first rung of the ladder when the young French subaltern in charge of the soldiers seized me, and, before I could resist, thrust me on one side. "Pardon, Major," he said, as he ran up the ladder, revolver in hand, "the Army has precedence in this case ; and I am younger than you." It was a kindly act, and I was particularly thankful that there was no one in the loft to make a short job of him. He dined with me the following evening.

Although, strange to say, the French officers did not invite me to join their mess, or, rather, "casino," their

commanding officer's wife soon after my arrival invited me to a *thé dansant*, and treated me almost as a guest of honour. I did not dance myself, but my head did the following morning, as I was not accustomed to their sweet champagne, with which my glass was filled up whenever I was not looking. Except in our combined night expeditions, the French soldiers kept deliberately aloof from the police, although we occupied the same barracks, probably because half the police were Germans. But I succeeded in creating a temporary *entente* by arranging a football match between them and my men, which was regarded by my superiors as a remarkable achievement. When I approached the French Commanding officer on the subject he seemed astonished by my daring, but gave his permission, which he could have hardly refused.

I made friends, and had some good times, with a very interesting expatriated Englishman, named Parker ; he held the important and lucrative post of " Marshal of the Stables " to Fürst von Donnersmarck, who in our country would be called Prince, as " Prince " Henry of Pless is, and Fürst von Bismarck was—I have never understood why, as Fürst and Prince are two remotely different ranks in Germany. Anyway, the Donnersmarck estate, second only to the Pless estate among the big landed properties of Germany, included all the country for many miles on one side of Tarnowitz, and I had to furnish a police guard for the Castle, where, by the way, a suite of rooms was always at my disposal. The stables contained the finest and most varied collection of horses in Europe, including Irish hunters, Arabs, a Shetland pony, and an Exmoor pony ; and the vehicles were equally varied. Parker's father had been a well-known trainer in Germany ; the son had left England at seven years of age, and had almost forgotten his native language. When, in 1922, the long-threatened Polish " Putsch " swept through Upper Silesia, Parker just managed to

escape from Donnersmarck with his life and as many of his horses as he could collect. Now Tarnowitz, although entirely German in population, has been given to the Poles, and I presume that von Donnersmarck will have to adopt Polish citizenship in order to retain possession of his Upper Silesia estate.

After some months at Tarnowitz, I was transferred to another police area, with its centre at Nikolai, only a mile from the frontier. The town was more Polish than my previous station, and surrounded by coal-mines and turbulent miners. The whole country for some forty miles in one direction was the property of "Prince" Henry of Pless (now forced to adopt Polish nationality and an unpronounceable Polish surname). That was before he divorced, on some frivolous ground recognised by German law, his English wife, formerly Miss Cornwallis West, who, by the way, had a far from happy time with the greatest territorial magnate in Europe. Devoted as she was to him, and to her duties as hostess of Pless Castle, he proved himself incapable of appreciating her; and the people on his estates—miners, wood-cutters, and farm-labourers—whom she sought to befriend, were more ungrateful.

It was at her initiation, I heard, that they were provided with model homes in their widely advertised Workmen's Colony. She insisted on each house having a flower-garden—a conspicuous innovation in German workmen's homes—and had them planted under her own supervision. Before long the tenants had rooted up flowers and plants and substituted potatoes, or left the ground to go to waste. When the trouble started in 1921 the Princess had to leave Pless to escape the violence threatened by those very people, and they eventually attacked the Castle.

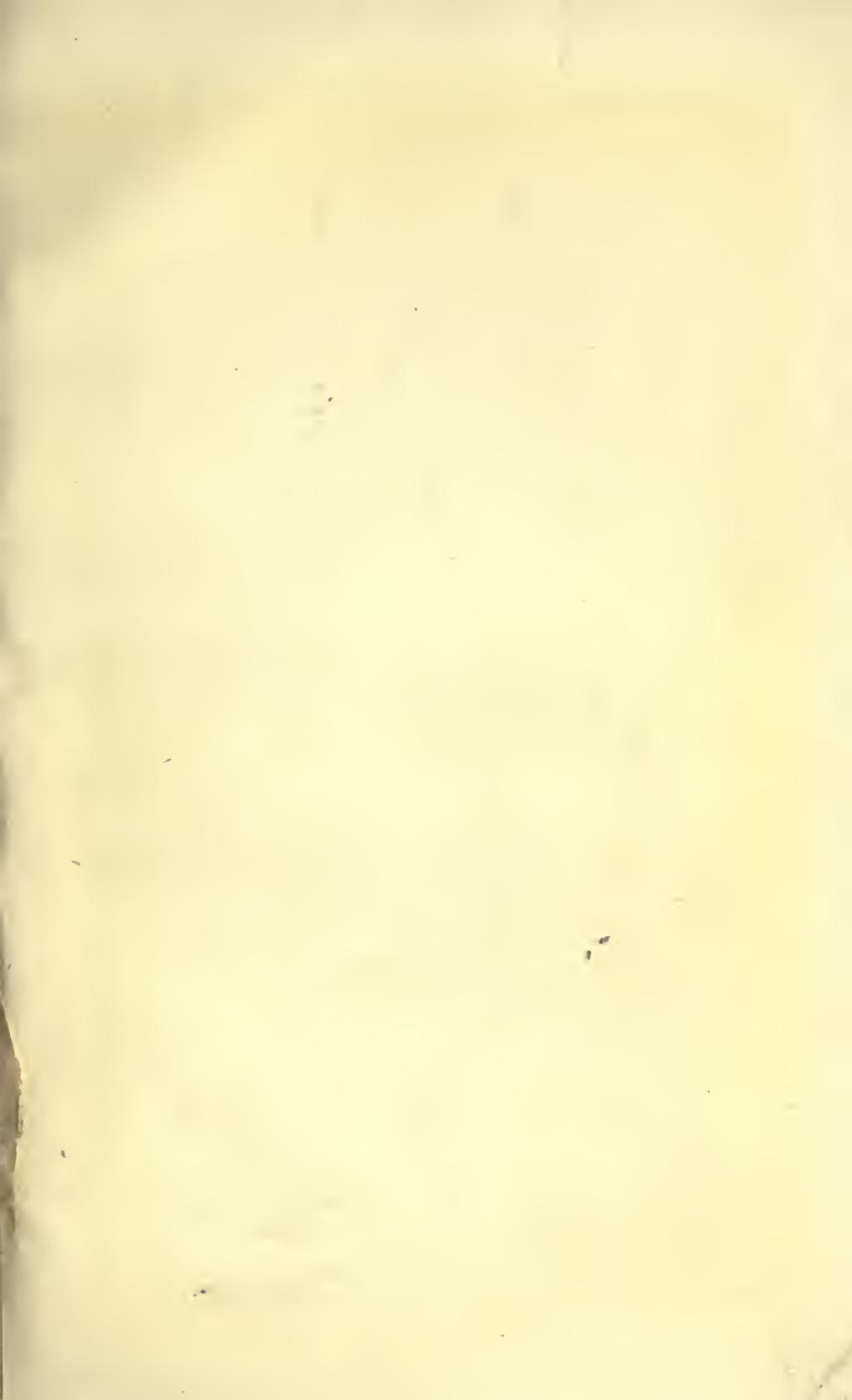
In the early stages of the Great War, when the Russian Army was marching on Germany, the last of the Kaisers made Pless Castle his headquarters, and could hear the

Russian guns on the other side of the frontier, which night after night disturbed the rest of the people of Nikolai.

My new job was more exciting than my Tarnowitz experience, and I had the disadvantage of having my men quartered all over the town instead of in barracks. One night five of them were not available for duty, having been "treated" by casual Polish acquaintances with a deadly spirit, the sale of which was prohibited. But I had at least one advantage there in my senior police officer, Captain ("Rittmeister") Notzny, who had served in the German cavalry through the war. He was absolutely fearless, strictly neutral between German and Pole, and very popular with the men, although a strict disciplinarian, and he hated going to bed. At all hours of day or night, in any emergency, he was ready, always diplomatic and making the best of a trouble, however serious.

Notzny was not only a very efficient officer, but had a quietly expressed sense of humour. One evening, when we were expecting an attack on the Germans of Nikolai during the night by a dangerous band of Poles, he got in touch with the leader, and, with my permission, brought him up to my flat, promising to introduce him to my whisky. The temptation was irresistible, and the introduction so satisfactory that it was nearly dawn when Notzny left our guest on a road outside the town, quite useless for any belligerent purpose. So the attack did not materialise that night.

By the way, my police captain at Tarnowitz was in the German Flying Service in the war, and claimed to have been in three of the air attacks on London. His descriptions were certainly interesting, particularly as he imagined that they had destroyed the Tower Bridge. My experiences of Polish police officers were far from satisfactory. At least two of them were continually conspiring against me, and, as I proved afterwards, in





IN UPPER SILESIA (1921).  
British, French and Italian Officers (including the Author) of the Inter-Allied Police, with their German and  
Polish Police Officers.

regular receipt of money from the Insurgents' Committee. Serious trouble with the Polish half of my police was doubtless instigated by those two. But, in spite of my representations to a high authority, I was unable to get rid of either owing to—presumably French— influence behind them. One of the two, after I left Upper Silesia, killed a German in cold blood, and somehow managed to escape.

One of the few people of any interest living near Nikolai was an elderly, retired German cavalry colonel, Baron von Morgenblessner, formerly a famous gentleman-jockey in his own country, and known in our Shires, where he occasionally hunted—sometimes, I believe, as a guest of Lord Lonsdale. Notzny and I drove over one day to ascertain whether he needed special police protection. While we were chatting with him in his study after dark the house was surrounded by about a dozen men, who could have had no idea of our presence until we two and the three police with us, who were taking tea with the servants, rushed out, and then, as the Germans say, "it went loose."

The Polish propagandists used to accuse us British officers of the Commission of showing partiality for the Germans, well knowing that almost invariably whenever there was trouble their own people were the aggressors, and that we always observed the neutrality imposed on us. But, in my experience, in spite of the bad feeling excited against us, whether district commissioners or police officers, the unruly element, chiefly among the miners, had confidence in our impartiality.

One afternoon the manager of a mine near Nikolai rang me up begging me to go and see him, as serious trouble was threatened. I drove over with Notzny, and we were told that the night-shift refused to go down that night, as they had heard that Germans had planned to flood the mine (a typical bit of propaganda). I sent for the leader of the shift, and assured him that there was no truth in the

story. He then agreed that the men would go down if I furnished a protection party of about fifty police. I had not a man to spare, as a state of siege had been proclaimed, and Nikolai required double the number that it had. Ultimately he said that they would be content if I and my police captain would stay near the pit's mouth all night. As the presence of both of us at our headquarters was indispensable, I compromised by supplying a guard of a sergeant and four men. The miners went down as usual; and nothing happened, because there was no ground whatever for the alarm.

The Polish propaganda bureau, which occupied a whole hotel at Beuthen, was not content with publishing columns of lies in its two newspapers, intended to inflame the Poles against the Germans, and sometimes against the Inter-Allied Commission, but managed to get some of their stories into London newspapers *via* Paris, and with the aid of the French Press. Several London papers published, as news from Upper Silesia, a story of a number of armed Germans attacking a peaceable meeting of Poles in the Beuthen Theatre and opening fire on them with a machine-gun. I think the number of shots said to have been fired at the "helpless" Poles was six hundred, and the number of them killed forty. The only foundation was that a surprise meeting of Poles was held in the theatre, in defiance of the Inter-Allied Commission's Ordinance, and, before our people could interfere, a few young Germans got into the place and made a bit of trouble. One revolver was fired, and no one on either side was damaged. Half a dozen police separated them in a few minutes.

One night two of my men on double patrol duty were shot at from behind. One, a Pole, was killed and the other seriously wounded. As it was the first case of any of the Inter-Allied police losing his life on duty, we decided to give the deceased an imposing funeral. Three

other police districts, as well as mine, sent representative parties, making two hundred and fifty men. The coffin was carried from the deceased's house to the neighbouring church by eight of his former comrades—four Germans and four Poles—between two long lines of police with carbines reversed.

It was a most impressive—and must have been a very expensive—ceremony. There were at least two hundred electric lamps round the interior of the big Roman Catholic Church, and masses of costly flowers. The music of the organ and a big choir was worthy of an English cathedral. Most of the service was, of course, in Latin, the remainder in Polish. Three British, and the same number of French and Italian, officers stood near the mourners. A conspicuous and pathetic figure was that of the man's fiancée, a girl of about seventeen, who, in bridal dress, with a large bouquet of white flowers, knelt on a white cushion at the head of the coffin. The "Group Commander" of the group of police areas to which mine belonged, an Italian major, delivered a funeral oration over the grave, which lasted some ten minutes. As he spoke in his own language, it was quite unintelligible to any of the great concourse of Germans and Poles, but his earnestness and very effective delivery, and the beauty of the Italian tongue, impressed them. From what I could understand of it, it was a remarkably appropriate and sympathetic address. When he had finished he called on me to say something. I had the advantage of speaking German which was understood by all, and what I had to say about "my brave comrade" required under a minute; translated in the local Polish newspaper next day, it occupied four lines.

On one of my (forbidden) visits to Poland, across the frontier which was marked by a stream with about four feet of water, in one part only by a footpath, I made the acquaintance of the Inspector-General of the Polish

Gendarmerie, who happened to be visiting his frontier posts. He was an Austrian cavalry colonel, and, being neutral, he told me some amusing stories about the comic "battles" which he had witnessed (about 1919) between Russian and Polish troops. Incidentally he introduced me to vodka (the nastiest of many nasty drinks I had ever tasted), and I returned the compliment with whisky, which he thoroughly appreciated. On that occasion I realised that Poland was well prepared to support the "Putsch" in Upper Silesia, which was then expected every day. I found a completely equipped military ambulance train drawn up within a mile of the frontier, and that a battalion of infantry had just marched into the nearest town.

The position of British troops and police officers in Upper Silesia was somewhat peculiar. Frequently we had to protect our former enemies, the Germans, from the Poles, and the former were more than appreciative of our care of them. In fact, the relations between our soldiers and the German population became so friendly as to cause annoyance to the French, for which we could not be blamed. When a Tommy, in some café, perhaps slightly inspired by artificial stimulant, put his arm round a fat German—or as far round as he could reach—and addressed him as, "Fritz, old chap," it merely expressed the British army's attitude towards the people whom it had so thoroughly beaten; and the Germans were fully appreciative. There were many cases of the kind. Sometimes when the Germans of some Polish district were in a state of panic owing to threatened attacks, they would beg me to send for English troops. When a battalion of the Sussex Regiment marched into Tarnowitz to relieve a French battalion, the German population received them with a tremendous ovation. Personally I got on well with the Poles (other than actual bandits), even when I had to exercise my authority in a way that was distasteful to them.

When the long deferred day of the plebiscite (the *raison d'être* of the Inter-Allied Commission) arrived my police had a busy time in and round Nikolai. Not only had nearly fifty polling-places to be supplied with police, but lorry-loads of Germans (classed officially as "emigrant voters") who had come back to Upper Silesia from all parts of Europe—some even from America—to record their votes, as they were entitled to do, had to be escorted to the polling-places. The Poles were more bitter towards them than towards the resident Germans. An organised band of Poles had just started attacking a lorry-load of "emigrants" when a body of police in another lorry arrived in the nick of time. In the course of the day I visited all the polling-places in my area, and there was no trouble anywhere. I had driven up to one of them when I heard a voice say, in what seemed a strange language out there: "Say, Major, will you and your police pose for the *Chicago* —?" (I forget the name of the paper), and I gave the enterprising American newspaper man all he wanted.

The immediate result of the plebiscite was an enormous German majority in the individual voting. Reckoned by communes, the Germans were approximately thirty per cent. over the Poles. As was inevitable, the three commissioners could not agree as to the geographical division of the country between Germany and Poland. The line insisted on by the French gave Poland very much the lion's share. The British commissioner's line, from which the Italian differed very slightly, seemed exactly just to both sides. Ultimately the decision of the Committee of Arbitration, appointed by the League of Nations, which gave the best of the rich mining districts to the Poles, astounded all who had studied the question impartially.

The Inter-Allied Commission for the Administration of Upper Silesia was supposed to be strictly neutral, and this was forcibly impressed on every British and Italian

officer serving with it. Anything like neutrality was obviously impossible for the French, in view of the secret Treaty between France and Poland, which was not discovered by us and Italy until some six months after the Inter-Allied Commission had started operations. The French commissioner had a predominating voice in the commission's deliberations ; and details of the consequent complications, when the British and Italian commissioners' views were opposed to his, would provide sensational reading, if ever our, or the Italian, Foreign Office were to publish some of the contents of their Upper Silesia pigeon-holes.

We subordinate officers, British and Italian, were frequently hampered in the performance of our duties when they involved causing inconvenience to the Poles. For instance, in my own case, when I had to prevent the smuggling of arms over the frontier from Poland, the police supplied to me for the purpose were not only quite insufficient, but so ill-clad, particularly as regards boots, that I could not send them out on patrol duty in bad weather.

The Chief of the Police was a French General, and I applied in vain to have these defects remedied. When I represented that there was one point on the frontier—not included in the area allotted to me—which was unguarded, I was told that that was not my affair. As was afterwards discovered, it was there that the Polish insurgents succeeded in getting thousands of rifles into Upper Silesia ; and they used them. On one occasion when I was arresting a Pole, the ringleader of an attack on some Germans on the Nikolai market-place, I was surrounded by a mob, and the officer in charge of the French picquet close by refused to let his men come to my assistance. But, thanks to the strong action of our commissioner, disciplinary measures had to be taken against him, and Italian troops were brought into the town to support the police.



IN UPPER SILESIA (1921).  
A Detachment of Inter-Allied Police (including the Author).



On another occasion, when the police were trying to disperse a threatening mob of Poles, I warned the ring-leader that I should have to send for troops. He replied defiantly, "We do not mind, if they are French troops." When I was searching a village for arms I found in each of two houses occupied by Poles a French flag rolled up in a parcel. They were quite new, and were intended, as I ascertained elsewhere in the village, to be displayed when the "Putsch" started. French flags could not have been purchased in Upper Silesia.

As a conspicuous exception, I met with support and encouragement from my immediate superior (between me and my French General), a colonel of French gendarmerie, who refused to be influenced by any political considerations in the performance of his police duty. I spent my last Sunday in Upper Silesia with him at his flat, and our parting was sadly cordial.

By the way, the "Poles" to whom I have referred were at that time not of Polish nationality, but German subjects who, being of Polish origin, always described themselves as Poles, and, after the plebiscite, took up arms against the Germans in the great "Putsch," and gave the British and Italian forces a lot of trouble.

It would be impossible to write about those experiences in Upper Silesia without any reference to the unpleasant relations with one of our Allies, entirely of their own making. Most of my countrymen who were serving with the Allied Commission will agree that I have been, perhaps unnecessarily, reticent. Every British officer (with one marked exception) whom I met out there seemed to smart under our sense of the humiliation to which we and our country were subjected, and no doubt many of them told the whole story in conversation after they came home.

At present it is only secret history, but it may some day be found necessary to publish it. Our Foreign Secretary showed splendid tact and forbearance at the

time. And later on he was probably sometimes tempted to enlighten those of the British public who imagined that our Government, by its firm attitude at a critical juncture, was carelessly imperilling the "Entente Cordiale." After the Germans were thoroughly knocked out, its "cordiality" was on several occasions conspicuously one-sided. But there is some consolation in knowing, or believing, that the regrettable, let us call them, "misunderstandings" did not reflect the feelings of the French people, but were due to the intrigues and hot-headedness of some of their politicians—of one in particular.

I had just corrected the printer's proofs up to this point when the General Strike afforded me yet another police experience: a strange contrast to my last. My duties (such as a war "disability" permitted) with the London Special Constabulary in a disturbed district appealed to my sense of humour.

In spite of exceptional credentials, I was considered by local "superior officers," with no police or military experience, as unworthy of any more responsible position than that of constable. But I was in good company in this respect. Ex-regular officers of the Navy and Army, ex-N.C.O's, and several others who had in recent years served in different police forces at home and abroad were, with me, more amused than annoyed when we took orders from youths or well-meaning elderly gentlemen, alike unfitted for real police work. The internal organisation seemed suited for something not much more combative than a Sunday School outing.

From what I heard and saw of other units, ours was one of the exceptions. But there should be no exceptions. If the Force is to be of any use against more or less organised mobs, such as there may be in the near future, there must be a systematic organisation.

## AFTERWORD

As mentioned before, I have never kept a diary ; and I have had very few notes to help me in my reminiscences. So, such few errors as there may be in dates, spelling of names, and other details should be excusable. And if readers find anything in a passage here or there reminiscent of something read elsewhere, it may be accounted for by my having, very rarely, repeated incidents or views contained in some of my (usually anonymous) newspaper contributions. Another point for apology : A biographer or *raconteur* who is temperamentally averse from hurting other people's feelings is disposed to omit stories or allusions that might make good reading. And I find that through want of space I have had to omit several experiences and incidents of more or less interest.

Now this "rolling stone" must cease to roll. To use another metaphor : I must soon be packing up to make room for a younger generation, conscious of having outstayed the welcome which my parents gave me so many years ago. Nearly all the men and women to whom I have referred in this book, some dear friends among them, have gone already, most of them younger than I, so I feel as if I were not playing the game. Then, too, there is at times a sense of loneliness. However, but for a little trouble (for which the last of the Kaisers is indirectly responsible) putting a stop to strenuous exercise, I flatter myself that I am nearly as fit as ever.

I have had a good share of the pleasures of life, but it has not been all "beer and skittles"; occasionally much the reverse, and then there has sometimes been consolation, if nowhere else, in those lines by Ella Wheeler Wilcox :

'Tis easy enough to be pleasant  
When life blows along like a song;  
But the man worth while is the man who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong.  
For the test of heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years;  
And the smile that is worth the praise of the earth  
Is the smile that comes through tears.

It is fortunate that the sense of humour is developed with advancing years—in my case, at any rate. As I realise at this moment that my days are numbered I am reminded of what a young woman novelist acquaintance told me when she had just got over a severe illness. Being then in poor circumstances, and having no relations in London, she was looked after by a little maid-of-all-work, who, after hearing from the doctor that her mistress might not recover, bent over her as she lay in bed, and gave vent to her feelings with: "Lor! miss, I am sorry; and yer ain't jined no club." Now it occurs to me that what is known among those who use it as a "burial club" has never been included in my plans for the future.

But I am not frivolous—any way, not in this connection. I find that I take serious subjects more seriously than before, particularly some of the great problems of the day, such as the League of Nations, class warfare, public health, (particularly the treatment of cancer), birth control, and, above all, non-sectarian religion. I am now a voracious reader, trying to make up for lost time and opportunities.

Growing older, one feels a little anxious as to the result of all this ultra—"freedom" of many of the young women

of to-day, particularly in its possible effect on the coming generation. But, happily, one still meets many girls, even of the "modern" school, who do not treat motherhood and its responsibilities with contempt or even indifference. A few years ago a little war-widow asked me to write something in her autograph book. A mere girl, and by no means unattractive, she seemed to care for nothing in the whole world but the bringing up of a baby boy, all that her husband had left her. Not being good at quotations, I did the best I could for her with—I think my memory is fairly reliable: "This world of ours has its great women as well as its great men; mothers whose greatness has never been recorded in prose or verse, but is indelibly impressed on the hearts and souls of sons whom it has guided to grand achievement."

I suppose it is a symptom of old age that one is conscious of a more intense loyalty to the Throne, and dares to take a fatherly, almost grandfatherly, interest in two young women, a Royal Princess and a Royal Duchess, and their offspring. One finds a fascination in all young children, in their homes or when they are out at play, whether in Kensington Gardens or in a slum street. Sometimes, more and more rarely, I meet with response, even from the occupant of a baby-carriage, but I have sadly to acknowledge that I have no right to it. Here, once again, I must quote from my old friend, *Punch*. In one of its recent issues an elderly gentleman, when shaking hands with a little girl of about seven, remarks, "I suppose you are now too old to be kissed." "Oh, no," she replies, "but you are." However, I fancy that I am not quite so time-worn as the rebuffed individual in Lewis Baumer's drawing.

• • • • •  
Fling wide the gates of memory  
And call them home once more,  
The dear dead dreams of yesterday  
That clamour at your door.

The gay glad hours which once were yours,  
The hope of joys to be,  
The many-cargoed ships that sailed  
And sank on some wild sea.

When all the songs of life are sung  
And all Life's tales are told,  
Fling wide the gates of memory  
To treasures loved of old.

MARJORIE D. TURNER.

Since writing what were intended to be my concluding lines I have happened to read this little poem, entitled "Afterwards," in the *Sunday Times*. It seems eloquently expressive of the more serious mood of reminiscence.





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old Bohemian

